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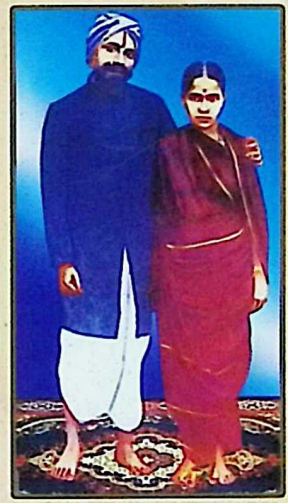
SCHOLARS AND SAVANTS

(Portraits of Selected Tamil Scholars)



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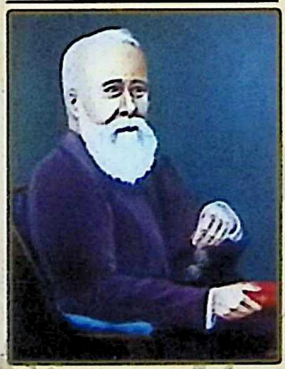

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SCHOLARS AND SAVANTS

(PORTRAITS OF SELECTED TAMIL SCHOLARS)

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This book is dedicated to
My beloved father
Late Shri E.S. VENKATRAMAN
and my beloved mother
Shrimathi RADHA VENKATRAMAN

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FOREWORD

N. MAHALINGAM,
Chairman, SAKTHI GROUP OF COMPANIES

Sri V. Sundaram, I.A.S., is a good friend of mine for a long period. He served as District Collector and later as Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu in various Departments. He is a person committed to integrity and honesty.

He is true friend of everyone in his personal life. He used to be always cheerful and used to keep others also equally cheerful. With his enthusiastic approach and assertiveness, he attracts everyone by his eloquence in English language. His fluency in Hindi as well as in Tamil is also highly admirable. As a magnanimous person he respects everyone and commands respect from everyone. His interest and talent in music are indeed laudable. Besides, he is a human computer, storing within his memory, abundant information pertaining to literature, politics and history. His recreation is to collect and preserve antiques in the fields of Art, Sculpture and Paining.

Begun with a prelude about the glorious revolution in Tamil literature, he has narrated in detail about the tremendous and remarkable contributions to Tamil by Paridhimal Kalaignar Suryanarayana Sastri, Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer, Johann Peter Rottler, Vaiyapuri Pillai, Ramalinga Vallalar, Mahakavi Bharathiyar, G.U. Pope, Arumuga Navalar, Manonmaniyam Sundaram Pillai, Pandithurai Thevar, Nallusamy Pillai, P.N. Appusamy, Vedanta

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Desigar, Kumara Guruparar, Vannacharabam Dandapani Swamigal and Thiruvasagamani K.M. Balasubramaniam. He has also written about the talented works by eminent personalities who are living with us today such as T.N. Ramachandran, Devaki Muthiah, M. Rajaram and Indira Parthasarathy.

So far, the historians have been mentioning that Saint Tulasidas had incorporated many of his ideas from Kambaramayanam, in his 'Ramcharita Manas' and also by having hearing the lectures of Kumaraguruparar at Varanasi. But, the correct fact is revealed by Sri Sundaram that Kumaraguruparr went to Varanasi only 32 years after the demise of Tulasidas.

Also, Sri Sundaram has explained how Pandithurai Thevar was different from other Zamindars, by his passion for the development of Tamil language and that he was a fervent patron for the glorious growth and development of Tamil Language. Similarly, he has brought out innumerable details about the Rottler Dictionary by praising the sub-headings given in that Dictionary which is really a creditable contribution.

Sri Sundaram has gracefully recollected the greatness of Ramanuja Kavirayar who taught Tamil to the European scholars like G.U. Pope, Winslow, and J. Rhenius. We see that 'Kandigai Urai' by Kavirayar was instrumental in guiding so many great scholars to develop their knowledge of Tamil grammar.

Thus, as a genius and an excellent biographer, Sri Sundaram has brought out by his reminiscences, so many intellectual facts about the great scholars and savants of Tamil literature.

I hope this book will definitely have an immense reception from the scholars.

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FOREWORD

PadmaSri Dr. **Indira Parthasarathy**

My association with V.SUNDARAM is a long stretch running to five decades and more. Initially as a student in the fifties of the last century, later, briefly as my colleague and since then, as of now, a friend about whom I always feel, he is there for me.

Nothing gives greater pride and fulfilment to a teacher than being a witness to the ascendance of his pupil to become one among the eminent intellectuals of the country, endowed with an unimpeachable character and uncompromising integrity. I feel proud to have taken teaching as my profession when I think of my students like Sundaram.

Sundaram is a voracious reader. His scholarship in the various disciplines of knowledge is really astounding. 'Nothing he touches that he does not adorn'.

I felt delighted when he asked me to write an introduction for the bunch of articles he has written in the last few years. Twenty seven in all, they are mostly about the literary giants of yester years, belonging to the late 19th and at the dawn of 20th centuries or to be more precise, those for whom Tamil was their life-breath during the colonial era. Many of them are now sadly forgotten and now it is given to Sundaram to perpetuate and immortalize their names in the history of Tamil literature. Since 'Tamil' became a political slogan, it is a challenging and a hazardous task to write an authentic and objective history of Tamil literature. And those who made earnest attempts in this regard were severely criticized and their books were thrown in the dustbin of history to suffer OBLIVION AND SOLITARY NEGLECT.

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One such scholar to suffer this humiliation was Professor S. Vaiyapuri Pillai (1891-1956). Sundaram has written an excellent piece about this academic giant of immense scholarship entitled, 'An Incomparable Tamil Lexicographer'. Professor Pillai published 'Tamil Lexicon' in six (6) Volumes between 1924 and 1936 on behalf of Madras University and as a matter of fact, one can venture to say that Madras University is yet to publish another work of this kind till now.

In fact, it came to me as a big revelation only after reading Sundaram's piece on Johan Philip Fabricius (1711-1791) that the Tamil-English Dictionary published by him is almost contemporaneous with Samuel Johnson's Dictionary in English, succeeding it by only 24 years! Such highly informative and very little known but highly significant facts are scattered in this book. Though Sundaram claims that this book is intended for the layman to become conscious of his own heritage, some of his nuanced facts he has brought out as products of his untiring labour provide a veritable intellectual feast even for the research scholars!

I am sure everyone who reads this book will be immensely rewarded by this experience.

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AN APPRECIATION

Dr. N. Sreedharan

(Retired Professor of Hindi, Presidency College, Chennai)

Sri V. Sundaram, who has retired from Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) but has not retired from his meandering career as a scholarly writer, busier now than ever, allowing no rest either to his intellect or his pen, is the author of these delectable essays presented in the form of this anthology. It is a magnificent dedication to Tamil literature and a rare gift to the Tamil people, I always read Sri Sundaram's essays verbatim for two valid reasons; to expand the horizon of my knowledge and to improve my command of English language. In this respect, the present anthology is eminently satisfying and successful in enriching one's knowledge and enhancing one's language skill.

Of course, Sri Sundaram is not the first Civil Servant capable of and successful in combining with official responsibilities scholarly researches. He has many illustrious predecessors to emulate and contemporaries to compete with. He has already published half-a-dozen books --- useful and appealing to the specialist as well as the general reader. Particularly, his 'Essays and Reviews" is a masterpiece and it will stand the test of time.

Having attained maturity in thought and mastery over language by writing on varied topics for years, Sri Sundaram has now turned the spotlight towards Tamil literature, the result being this anthology, a compendium of eminent Tamil writers and scholars, mostly of yester years, with a sprinkling of contemporary geniuses.

According to Thomas Carlyle, biography is a means of recounting the earthly pilgrimage of a man. But most of us just

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drift and naturally, we cannot expect the posterity to make even a passing reference about us. But the heroes Sri Sundaram presents in these pages are men of mettle. They had a clear picture of their destination and definite ideas about the ways and means to reach there. They are the Salt of the Earth. Their only drawback, from the historian's point of view, is that they almost always avoided the limelight. As a result, they are fast falling into oblivion. It is to the great credit of Sri Sundaram that he delved deep into the past and has reintroduced them in such an impressive manner that they have attained second lease of life which is never going to expire. In this attempt to recreate the past of the lesser known scholars of Tamil, instead of eulogizing the contemporary writers with political leanings, Sri Sundaram is aware that he will not receive any award or reward, who ever occupies the gaddi of Tamil Nadu Government for his untiring service to the cause of reconstructing the history of contemporary Tamil literature. He has no expectations either as a true follower of the Bhagawad Gita. Never sought any praise in the past also while helping people and institutions to survive and grow.

The gallery of true savants and servants of Tamil literature, around which Sri Sundaram conducts the reader, consists of fascinating portraits of creative geniuses like Parithimal Kalaignar, Bharathiyar, Sundaram Pillai, Kumaraguruparar; patrons of Tamil literature like Damodaram Pillai, J.M. Nallasamy Pillai, Pandithurai Thevar; lexicographers from abroad like Fabricus, Rottler; trendsetters like Pe.Na. Appusamy, Indira Parthasarathy; spiritual writers like Sekkizhar Adipodi Dr. T.N. Ramachandran, Thiruvachakamani Balasubramaniam, Tirumathi Devaki Muthiah; translators like Arumugha Navalar and Dr. M. Rajaraman. All these and more who find a place in this anthology seem to be an odd assortment of quaint scholars, daring yet humble. They are all united in their unlimited and genuine love of Tamil language and literature.

If we leave out the contemporary writers, others have written before our times and they were travellers of unchartered paths-facing indifference, opposition, non-recognition, humiliation and,

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sometimes, even undergoing punishment. By their sufferings they have made the journey smooth to latter-day research scholars and writers. We are grateful to Sri Sundaram for introducing these literary giants and their awe-inspiring achievements to us and reminding us how narrow-minded today's scholars have become.

Most of the writers portrayed in this anthology no longer exist but their books will never die and their contribution can never be erased, because memory cannot be abolished.

It is astounding that Sri Sundaram amidst his multifarious activities, could collect the vast material for this impressive anthology, because much material concerning the past has already been lost due to lack of facilities for preservation. In order to write even a single research piece in this anthology. Sri Sundaram would have sweated a lot and turned over half a library. His passion for reading has made this Herculean task a Labour of Love. It is because of his untiring efforts that we the readers, acquire the same amount of knowledge with least strain. Kudos to Sri Sundaram!

Like Edward Gibbon who had to select and arrange the vast material of Roman History, Sri Sundaram too might have found it a tough task – to separate corn from chaff — to decide what to give and how much so that enough justice is done to each writer presented here. Luckily his intellect which has the keenness of an arrow had come to his rescue.

Sifting the material is not enough. One has to present it in a comprehensible and interesting manner to the readers. In Sri Sundaram's essays, we find a happy blending of content and form – merging well like body and soul. He is a wordsmith par excellence and his style is evocative.

If Shakespeare were alive today, he would praise Sri Sundaram after going through his anthology in the following words, "He is a scholar, a ripe and good one." ●

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PREFACE

My beloved father Shri. E.S. Venkatraman (1932-1989) was a profound scholar in both Tamil and English Literature. It was he who initiated me into the eternal beauties of the enchanting world of timeless Tamil Literature. Right from the age of 11 in 1952, I can recall his singing with great devotion the melodiously beautiful hymns of Appar, Sundarar, Gnanasambandar, Manickavachakar, Pattinathar, Thayumanavar, Vallalar and Mahakavi Bharathi at my home in New Delhi. My father used to sing the soulful songs of Gopalakrishna Bharathi dedicated to Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram. It was he who exposed me to the glory and grandeur of Thirukkural, Silapathikaram, and Kamba Ramayanam.

In terms of fervent devotion to the Almighty my mother was very much like my father. It was she who made me chant the Sanskrit verses of Bhaja Govindam song of Adi Sankara at the age of 11. Even though my mother lives in Coimbatore today with my sister, yet I can hear her vibrant and resonant incantations of Lalitha Sahasranamam, Soundarya Lahari and Vishnu Sahasranamam in Sanskrit.

I can vividly recollect my mother singing the Tamil verses of Thirupaavai of Andal, Thiruvachakam of Manickavachakar, Thirupugazh of Arungirinathar, Abhirami Andadi and Abhirami Padigam of Abhirama Bhattar, My mother too had a tremendous influence upon my spiritual and religious awareness right from the days of my boyhood between the ages of 11 and 15. She made me aware of the resplendent beauty of Tamil hymns of yore.

It is an exalting and elevating experience to hear my mother rendering the ecstatic Tamil songs from Thiruvachakam of Saint

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Manikavachakar. Thiruvachakam, the divine, God - intoxicated devotional poem dedicated to Lord Shiva is the supremest gem of all the devotional poems in the world. Lord Shiva himself was so moved by the nectarine sweetness of the poem that he called Saint Manickavachakar 'the man whose words were precious like rubies bright with passions quivering redness in the heart.' In particular, it is a sheer delight to hear my mother render the following invocation song from Thiruvachakam.

ஓ
சிவமயம்
திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்
திருவாசகம்

1. சிவபுராணம்

சிவனது அநாதி முறைமையான பழமை

திருப்பெருந்துறையில் அருளியது
கலிவெண்பா
திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

வாழ்த்து

நமச்சிவாய வாஅழ்க நாதன்தாள் வாழ்க
இமைப்பொழுதும் என்நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான் தாள்வாழ்க
கோகழி யாண்ட குருமணிதன் தாள்வாழ்க
ஆகமம் ஆகிநின்று அண்ணிப்பான் தாள்வாழ்க
ஏகன் அநேகன் இறைவன் அடிவாழ்க
வேகம் கெடுத்தாண்ட வேந்தன் அடிவெல்க

The above verse has been translated into English as follows by Thiruvachakamani K.M. Balasubramaniam.

SALUTATIONS

Namasivaya hail! Hail to the Foot of the Lord!
Hail the Foot of Him Who does not part
Even for a twinkling from my heart!
Hail the Foot of the Gem of Teacher ruling in Kokazhi!

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Hail the Foot of Him Who has become
The Agamas and Who does sweetly bide!
Hail the Foot of the One, the Not One the Immanent Lord!
Victory to the Foot of the King Who calmed
The storm within the soul and made me His!

It is a divine poetic experience to hear my mother rendering the melodious verses of Manickavachakar. Though my mother is no poet, yet I have no doubt that my mother has a poetic heart for Tamil poetry. Perhaps Lord Tennyson had true devotees like my mother in view when he said:

"To have the deep poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame."

How very right Lenox Remond was when he wrote in his famous autobiography: "Judicious mothers will always keep in their mind, that they are the first book read, and the last put aside, in every child's library."

My father made me aware of the timelessness of great literature in both English and Tamil by quoting the following verse of W.H. Auden:

"A sentence uttered makes a world appear
Where all things happen as it says they do
We doubt the speaker, not the tongue we hear
Words have no words for words that are not true"

– W.H. Auden

What is the origin of literature? Magicians have never been able to control their angels or their demons until they discovered their names. The origin of all literature lies here. A word is a magic incantation by which the self exercises power... first over itself and then over other selves and then, for all we know over the powers of nature. After commanding and creating life, the next thing that words have to do is to criticize it, viewed in this light when the whole thing is reduced to its essence it will be difficult to improve upon Mathew Arnold's dictum/definition: "Good literature of any kind must be a criticism of Life." Spinoza summed it up in one sentence: "All great literature is literature

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of power, literature of knowledge and literature of escape." That is how we have the literature of knowledge and the literature of power; we hear of the literature of interpretation and the literature of escape.

My father often used to say that the dictionary is full of words. It is how words are used that makes the big difference. Words can lift us into Heaven or lower us into Hell. I can still recollect the resonant words of my father on the Art of Words: "The art of words is to use them creatively, to select and arrange them to inspire the mind, stir the heart, lift the spirit." My father used to tell me that the Nayanmars and the Alwars had mastered the Art of Sacred Words as great instruments of devotion to Lord Shiva and Lord Narayana respectively.

Right from my childhood days my father taught me the history of both English and Tamil Literature. He was a great admirer of the works and writings of Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer (1855-1941). In particular, he made me read the autobiography of Dr. U. Ve Swaminatha Iyer in Tamil called என் சரித்திரம் (En Charithiram). I was fascinated by it when I read it for the first time at the age of 14 in 1955, Since then I have read it several times, Written in simple and homely Tamil, that great work made me aware of the political, social, cultural and literary landscape of Tamilnadu (then a part of Madras Presidency) in the 19th century. Later I read about the life and times of Thiruvaduthurai Meenakshisundaram Pillai (1815-1876) who was the Guru of Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer.

My academic interest in 19th century Tamilnadu was aroused by Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer's autobiography, As a lover of Tamil music, I was enchanted by U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer's references to the song of Gopalakrishna Bharathi (1811-1896) and his famous work titled 'Nandanar Charithram.'

It was the wide-ranging and sweeping vision displayed by Dr. U. Ve Swaminatha Iyer in his autobiography in Tamil called என் சரித்திரம் (En Charithriram) which induced me to look at the larger literary landscape of Tamil literature in the 19th century.

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I then realized with great thrill and wonder that great Tamil scholars and savants of 19th century Tamilnadu like Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879), C.W. Damaodaram Pillai (1832-1901), Professor Manonmaniam Sundaram Pillai (1855-1897), Dr. G.U. Pope (1820-1908), Parithimal Kalaignar (1870-1903), Pandithurai Thevar (1867-1911), J.M. Nallaswami Pillai (1864-1920) were all contemporaries of Dr. Uve Swaminatha Iyer. I then decided to study and write about the lives, times and works of these scholars in an outline form for the benefit of the English reading younger generation today most of whom seem to be totally ablivious of the great work of these scholars. I am firmly of the view that the present is not enough; and the present and the future together are not enough, The past also hath its absolute; for the timeless underlies at every point the flowing of the mystery of Time. True literary sensibility is geared to the timeless, that is, to the Now only as an avenue by which all time can be reached.

Most of the essays, in this collection relate to the 19th century. Three essays relate to much earlier period – the first one on Vedanta Desika (1268-1369), the second on Adi Kumaragurupara Swamigal (1625-1688) and the third on Johann Philip Fabricius (1711-1791). A few essays are on 20th century Tamil men of letters like Pena Appuswami Iyer (1891-1986), Thiruvachakamani K.M. Balasubramaniam (1908-1974) who unfortunately are no longer with us. The rest are on contemporary writers like Indira Parthasarathy, Sekkizhar Adippodi Dr. TNR and Dr. M. Rajaram.

Goethe (1749-1832) says that good literature lifts you up to its own level while bad literature develops your faults. This may be true enough as long as you remember that 'good' and 'bad' are relative terms. Every reader has his own 'good' and his own 'bad' in the world of books, and if you are more sophisticated than I am, my 'good' in literature that which lifts me up and refines me, may very easily be your 'bad' and carry with it loads of fertilizing manure for your most unpleasant faults.

Great books of literature are man's rational protest against the irrational, man's pitiful protest against the implacable, man's

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ideal against the world's real, man's word against the cosmic dumbness, man's life against the planetary death, man's revelation of the God within him, man's repartee to the God without him. A great work of literature touches not only 'a man' but MAN.

Tamil literature, the real literature of the 19th century, must not be gulped down like some potion which may be good for the heart or good for the brain --- the brain, that stomach of the soul. Tamil literature must be taken and broken into bits, pulled apart, squashed --- then its lovely reek will be smelt in the hollow of the palm, it will be munched and rolled upon the tongue with relish; then, and only then, its rare flavour will be appreciated at its true worth and the broken and crushed parts will again come together in your mind and disclose the beauty of a unity to which you have contributed something of your own blood.

I am extremely thankful to 'Arut Selvar' Dr. N. Mahalingam, Chairman, Sakthi Group of Companies, for having patiently gone through this book and obliging me with a scholarly foreword.

I am immensely grateful to my school teacher Dr. Indira Parthasarathy for having come forward so graciously to write a foreword to this collection of Essays.

I also thank my friend Dr. N. Sreedharan, a profound scholar in Hindi, Tamil and English for having contributed a note of appreciation to this volume. ●

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பாயிரம்

கடவுள் வாழ்த்து

GLORY OF GOD

1. அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு.
'A' is the beginning of all alphabets
God is the origin of the Universe.
'A' is the first of all letters. Likewise, God is the beginning of all the worlds.

2. கற்றதனா லாய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்
நற்றாள் தொழாஅர் எனின்.
Of what use is learning if it fails to lead
To the holy feet of all-knowing God?
Learning is of no use if the learner does not submit himself to God.

3. மலர்மிசை ஏகினான் மாணடி சேர்ந்தார்
நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்.
Who clasp the feet of God in flowery mind
Live long in this earthly abode.
Those who submit themselves to the sacred feet of God live long in this word.

4. வேண்டுதல்வேண் டாமை இலான்அடி சேர்ந்தார்க்கு
யாண்டும் இடும்பை இல.
No misery falls on those who hold
The feet of the unbiased God.
No sufferings come to those who hold the feet of God, who is above likes and dislikes.

5. இருள்சேர் இருவினையும் சேரா இறைவன்
பொருள்சேர் புகழ்புரிந்தார் மாட்டு.
Twin deeds of dark illusion, good and bad,
Won't be theirs who glorify God.
Those who praise the glory of God have no confusion about right and wrong deeds.

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THE MOUTHPIECE OF LITERARY RENAISSANCE IN TAMIL

Till the middle of the 19th century, modern Tamil development was hindered by lack of access to the printing press. The predominance of English as the offcial language of Government and medium of higher education, also acted as a barrier to the smooth development of Tamil as a living and functional language.

Through his inspired and inspiring writings Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi tried to liberate Tamil culture from the time-honoured constraints of custom and superstition and, the Tarriii language from the fetters of self-imposed pedantry and obscurantism. While Bharathi breathed a new life into Tamil poetry, writers like Thiru Vi. Ka., Va. Ve. Su Iyer and Va. Raa. gave a new and vital dimension and direction to Tamil prose.

After Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi's death in 1921, Va. Raa. a distinguished writer, critic and editor ardently publicised Bharathi's style and form; he encouraged younger Tamil writers in the 1930s and 1940's to study Bharathi and avoid the temptation of writing in English. The main vehicle for his message was his literary review **Manikkodi,** the first issue of which was launched on September 17, 1933.

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மணிக்கொடி

தினசரி "காந்தி" இணைக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறது.

ஆசிரியர்:—பி. ஸ்ரீனிவாசன்

கொடி—1 மலர் 18. அக்டோபர், 22, 1935 மாதமிருமுறை

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"மணிக்கொடி" பிரதி மாதம் இரண்டாவது சனிக்கிழமை ஞாயிற்றுக்கிழமைகளில் வெளிவரும்.

ஆண்டுச் சந்தா: உள்நாடு 3—0—0 வெளிநாடு: 4—8—0

தாய்மை முதல் கடைசி வரை
சிரிப்பும் சந்தோஷமும் முடையது

கிஸ்மத்-கா-ஹிகார்

(அல்லது அதிருஷ்ட காரியதரிசி)

மாஸ்டர் மோஹனும்
மிஸ். பாவுலியஸ் சுபரும்

நடிக்க

கெயிட்டி யில்

சனிக்கிழமை 21-9-35 முதல் தினசரி 3வது காட்சிகள் 6-15 & 9-30 மணி
சனி, ஞாயிறுகளில் மாலை 6-15 மணிக்கு காலை.

MANIKKODI ISSUE DATED 22 OCTOBER 1935

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A new era in the history of Tamil Literature and journalism was inaugurated by the birth of Manikkodi. This new Tamil weekly was launched on 17th September, 1933 by a team of young and dedicated intellectuals like Stalin K. Srinivasan, Va. Raa., Chockalingam and others.

Stalin K.Srinivasan

T.S.Chockalingam

The national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was in full swing then. These men were aflame and aglow with the fire of nationalism, universalism and humanism. They were determined to liberate Tamil from the traditional prison of hagiograpy and make it a powerful and sensitive instrument for the communication of secular ideas, popular hopes and urges and aspirations, consistent with the spirit of the time. The following report appeared in the issue of THE HINDU dated September 20,1933:

"We have received a copy of the first issue of 'Manikkodi" a new Tamil weekly edited by Mr. K. Srinivasan, and published every Sunday from No. 35, Sembudoss Street, Madras. A glance at the issue reveals that it is a pioneer in weekly journalism in Tamil and is planned on the lines of such Sunday newspapers in English as The Sunday Times and The Observer, it combines selected news items with well-written and well-reasoned articles on subjects of topical and cultural interest. Cartoons and quips add the necessary spice to the fare thus provided. The price per copy is one anna and the annual subscription is Rs. 3-8-0."

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The editorial in the first issue of Manikkodi stated: "Bharathi sang about 'Manikkodi' (our beloved flag). Gandhiji held aloft 'Manikkodi1. Congress raised 'Manikkodi'. It was 'Manikkodi' that gave a new enthusiasm to thousands of freedom fighters to participate in the freedom struggle. 'Manikkodi' is the glowing symbol — seedling — corner-stone — of an evergrowing political ideal. We are christening our "Manikkodi' after this 'Manikkodi' and starting our new venture. Others should speak and write about this 'Manikkodi'. We are sure that they would. Enemies might assail or attack it. Friends might sustain it. Minute after minute, the Guardian of Time would render its own account. Manikkodi is an attempt, the Court of Time will give its finaf verdict. Manikkodi heralds a new life. Its life and growth lie in our ideal, in your abiding support and affection and above all in Divine grace."

Within an hour of the release of the first issue of Manikkodi on 17th September 1933, KALKI R. Krishnamurthi rushed to the office of Manikkodi and exclaimed to Stalin K. Srinivasan: "A good journal ought to be like this. Can anyone else proffer this kind of Tamil? Can anyone else attempt a similar translation?" Kalki had in mind the following Tamil translation of Keat's immortal line in English, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever' which had appeared in the Manikkodi. The Tamil translation of this line from Keats was done as follows: 'அழகிய பொருள், அழியா இன்பம்.'

Politics, fine arts, literature, faith and religion— all these themes were subjected to the new and microscopic literary-cum-linguistic treatment of Manikkodi. It is significant to note that several distinguished Tamil writers of latter days started their literary career by writing for this new journal. Bharathi Dasan's poem Makkal Maranda Inbam (மக்கள் மறந்த இன்பம்) was published in the second issue of Manikkodi. The fact that so much encouragement was given to Bharathi Dasan so early in his career would by itself constitute a significant achievement for Manikkodi.

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The Fourth issue featured a poem entitled Anbe Nathanai Kanbadhu (அன்பே நாதனைக் காண்பது) by Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai. Pudumai Pithan, Thi. Janakiraman, Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan, Mouni, La. Sa. Ra., Chitti Sundararajan, and many others were considerably influenced by the literary tradition of Manikkodi and went about pursuing their literary endeavours with great gusto and enthusiasm, not only maintaining the glorious tradition but also enriching it all the time.

It is not often recognised that Stalin K. Srinivasan, one of the founders, was a powerful writer in Tamil. In my view, his Tamil prose has the limpid quality of Charles Dickens's writing, the strength and vigour of Karl Marx's essays and the sombre wisdom of Bertrand Russel's writings. Publication of a collection of his important Tamil prose writings is long overdue.

What Boswal was to Johnson, Va. Raa. was to Mahakavi Bharathi. As a writer of original, creative, iconoclastic, rebellious and irrepressible Tamil prose, Va. Raa. was unrivalled. His Tamil was devoid of technique in the sense of being just a surface skill, it had lot of inner power and often came straight and unadorned from his heart, with the simplicity of talk. No wonder his writings had the power not merely to entertain people but to move them; not only to instruct but also to inspire and initiate them.

That is why Khasa Subba Rau appropriately observed: "Va. Raa. is the pioneer in Tamil of the conversational type of writing of utter simplicity understandable even by the least literate, that it has since become so common a fashion. The practice of simplicity as a literary vehicle is not however as simple as it seems. Ornate flourishes and complex involutions of style can save a writer from the effects of mental emptiness, but simplicity is deadly and passes off into boredom unless sustained by a vigorous mind charged with rich experience or vital social impulses. Va. Raa's writing is the emanation of a character never at rest in the campaign of unmasking the spurious. He is not unnerved by the powerful. He is not repelled by the squalid which he feels to be just an effect of the tyranny of the opulent on the indigent and the disinherited. In

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the midst of all turmoils he maintains the poise of a philosopher and acts with the guts of a warrior...It is a matter for rejoicing that after years of neglect, the power of his intrinsic worth shows at last signs of winning the recognition that is its due."

The Golden Age of Tamil Short Stories began with the birth of Manikkodi in September 1933. K. Srinivasan, Va. Raa (V. Ramaswamy Iyengar) and T. S. Chokkalingam, three dedicated freedom fighters with an innate love for Tamil language succeded in pushing Tamil Literature into the modern literary world. New in meaning, new in content and new in style was the slogan which Manikkodi adopted following the style of Mahakavi Subramania Barathi in his Cheetu Kavigal (சீட்டுக் கவிகள்).

Though the journal was not a successful commercial venture, yet it marked the advent of a new chapter in Tamil literature as `Manikodi' became the platform for a number of creative writers to express their literary sensibilities. The stellar role occupied by this magazine in the nourishment of modern Tamil has been really remarkable. Amongst the new generation of young and brilliant writers who participated in the Tamil literary rennaisance set in motion by Manikkodi were Pudumaippithan, Na.Pichchamurthy, Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan, Ka. Na. Su., Si .Su. Chellappa, B.S Ramayya, La. Sa. Ramamirtham, Mauni, Ku. Azhagirisamy, Thi. Janakiraman, Stalin Srinivasan, Sangu Subramanian and Chitti Sundarajan.

It is usual for critics and chroniclers of modern Tamil writing to refer to Manikkodi as the acknowledged mouthpiece of a literary renaissance in Tamil. Manikkodi was indeed an avant-garde journal, setting new trends, establishing new norms, proclaiming new values, destroying old customs and upholding new ideals. Though it died within five years of its birth yet it achieved its avowed mission of proclaiming to all the world that Tamil literature is a movement and not a condition; a journey and not a harbour.

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A TRAILBLAZER IN TAMIL LITERARY MOVEMENT

G Subramania Iyer, the founder of the Hindu and Swadeshamitran, paid his tribute to Parithimal Kalaignar (பரிதிமால் கலைஞர்) in these words in 1895: 'Of the new band of graduates who have thus stepped into the field of Tamil literature, I am glad to mention as one of the most, if not the most conspicuous amongst them the name of Pandit V. G. Suryanarayana Sastriar of the Madras Christian College. Apart from the surviving generation of the old school of Pandits, Pandit Swaminatha Aiyar, for instance, I think I may say that Mr V. G. Suryanaryana Sastriar is the foremost worker in the cause of the advancement of Tamil literature. He is still young and I hope it will be his distinction and fame to leave behind him enduring marks of the influence of his genius on the new era into which Tamil literature is struggling to enter.'

G. Subramania Iyer was indeed prophetic in his appraisal of Parithimal Kalaignar who became *one of the great pioneers and savants in the field of Tamil literature at the turn of the 20th century.*

V. G. Suryanarayana Sastri (who assumed the Tamil pseudonym of Parithimal Kalaignar (பரிதிமால் கலைஞர்) which is only a literal translation of his Sanskrit name was born on 6-7-1870 at Vilacheri near Madurai (Tamilnadu) to a devout Saivite Brahmin Govinda Sivan. He was put in school, to learn

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Sanskrit and Tamil when he was 10 years old. He learnt the Vedas under his father and Tamil under S. Sabapathy Mudaliar who was teaching Tamil at the Madurai College. He was such a prodigy in learning that in a few years he learnt practically all that his teachers knew and his father was naturally anxious that he should learn English as well.

Accordingly he was sent for his secondary school education and the first course in Arts in the Madurai College. Later, he went to Madras and joined the Madras Christian College (Miller College as it was popularly known in those days) to study English, Philosophy and Tamil. He soon became a favourite pupil of the reputed Dr Miller, Principal of that college and took his BA degree in 1893 obtaining the first rank in the college in philosophy and Tamil. Dr Miller wished to offer Sastri a Lecturerership in philosophy in his college. But the young Parithimal Kalaignar preferred a Tamil Pundit's position, though the latter position carried a lower salary and status. But here was a graduate of the Madras University securing a university rank deliberately choosing the less coveted job of teaching Tamil to unwilling students. He was the first man in the history of Tamilnadu to make such a choice.

Parithimal Kalaignar revolutionised the teaching of Tamil to such an extent that some of the best students in the college were attracted to the Tamil language and to the new teacher. The number of such boys grew rapidly till he formed the 'Tamil Scholars Group' around him and to them he taught unstintingly all that he had learnt from his teachers and for no consideration whatsoever. Thus he sacrificed a great deal in the cause of his mother tongue which was suffering from neglect and ignominy in those days. This act of self-sacrifice won for him the admiration and support of Dr Miller.

The great editor of Tamil classics C.W. Damodaram Pillai, hearing Parithimal Kalaignar's competence and versatility in Tamil, called and examined him, and discovering the genius of the young man presented him a copy each of his edited works. He continued to be his friend and patron till the end.

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Parithimal Kalaignar was appointed Head Tamil Pandit in the Madras Christian College in 1895. He was very unorthodox in his teaching methods and treated his pupils as co-adventurers in the cause of literary discoveries. He had no respect for tradition merely on the ground of its antiquity and he infused into his students the same spirit of heterodoxy and non-conformism within the bounds of literary decency. He wrote poetry, prose, drama, and he wrote a standard work on Tamil dramaturgy called *Natakaviyal.*

He wrote the first sonnet in Tamil and called it Tanippasuram (தனிப்பாசுரம்). Some of them were immediately translated into English by Dr G.U. Pope of Oxford University. Dr. Pope hailed Parithimal Kalaignar as 'the herald of a new school heartily to be welcomed'.

As years passed his range of literary activities grew wider and wider. He became the editor of a journal called *Gnanabodhini* (ஞானபோதினி) and edited it till his death. M.S. Purnalingam Pillai who wrote the first History of Tamil Literature in English dedicated it to him in touching verse.

Parithimal Kalaignar boldly wrote the first tragic drama Mana Vijayam in Tamil and caused a great shock to the orthodox conservatives in the Tamil literary world. His tireless and incessant activity started telling on his health. He had contracted tuberculosis. He fought valiantly against the disease but finally succumbed to it, on the 2 November 1903, at the age of 33. His grief-stricken father renounced the world. The young widow and her daughter and two sons, all practically infants, came under the sheltering care of her parents. *Indeed the world of Tamil literature had seen a great meteor rise and pass, leaving an incredible and unmatched career as a splendid memory.*

Introducing two Tamil sonnets by Parithimal Kalaignar, one on Thiruvalluvar and the other on War, Mr F.W. Kellett, the Editor of the Madras Christian College magazine, in the issue dated July 1901 wrote as follows:-

"A time comes in the history of a language when there are set before it the ways of life and death. If it cannot burst the

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bands which enfold it, it dies. If it can find freedom of movement and expression it lives. It is generally agreed that as a literary language, Tamil is now at this critical stage. The danger to its life is increased by the presence side by side with it of that mighty rival, English. But apart from that competition, literary Tamil in itself has the seeds of the disease which may prove mortal unless it is checked. Pedantry, conventionalism, artificiality and imitativeness are among these seeds of decay. The remedy is a return to natural simplicity....Many can speak Tamil with power and grace, who when they take pen in hand are the slaves of arbitrary standards of composition. Happily there are some in whom nature and true literary instinct and inspiration have begun to work, forcing them to seek deliverance from narrowing and cramping canons of art and to express themselves in modern forms, in natural tones and in a language understood by the common people. Parithimal Kalaignar is the leading harbinger of this new movement in the field of Tamil literature."

More than a century has passed since his death. Whatever the final judgment of literary criticism, it cannot be disputed that he was a great lover of Tamil, who strove to do his best for advancing the cause of Tamil language and literature.

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THE SAMUEL JOHNSON OF TAMIL LANGUAGE

Just about the same time when Samuel Johnson was compiling his famous and path-breaking English dictionary, a pioneering work in the language that came out in 1755, a man called ***Johann Phillipp Fabricius*** was in Madras pondering over a similar work that will help the British rulers learn the local tongue. His hard labour spanning several years resulted in the bringing out of the famous Tamil and English Dictionary in 1779.

Fabricius, a missionary, printed the dictionary in Vepery and was assisted in his lexicographical work by his fellow missionary Johann Christian Breithaupt. Fabricius gave the title of ***'A Malabar and English Dictionary'***. In the landmark dictionary, the words and phrases of the Tamil language, which were commonly called by Europeans at that time as 'the Malabar language' were suitably explained in great detail with reference to context, usage, convention and custom.

The dictionary contained 9000 words. An interesting fact is that this dictionary was compiled by Fabricius when he was in jail for debts contracted by standing security for some people in Vepery. It has been recorded that the large-scale selling of this dictionary enabled him to discharge his liabilities. In August 1788 Fabricius resigned from his charge of the Vepery Press. Vepery thus became the Mecca of Lexicography because of the tireless exertions of Fabricius and Breithaupt who lived in Vepery for more than 35 years from 1752 to 1790.

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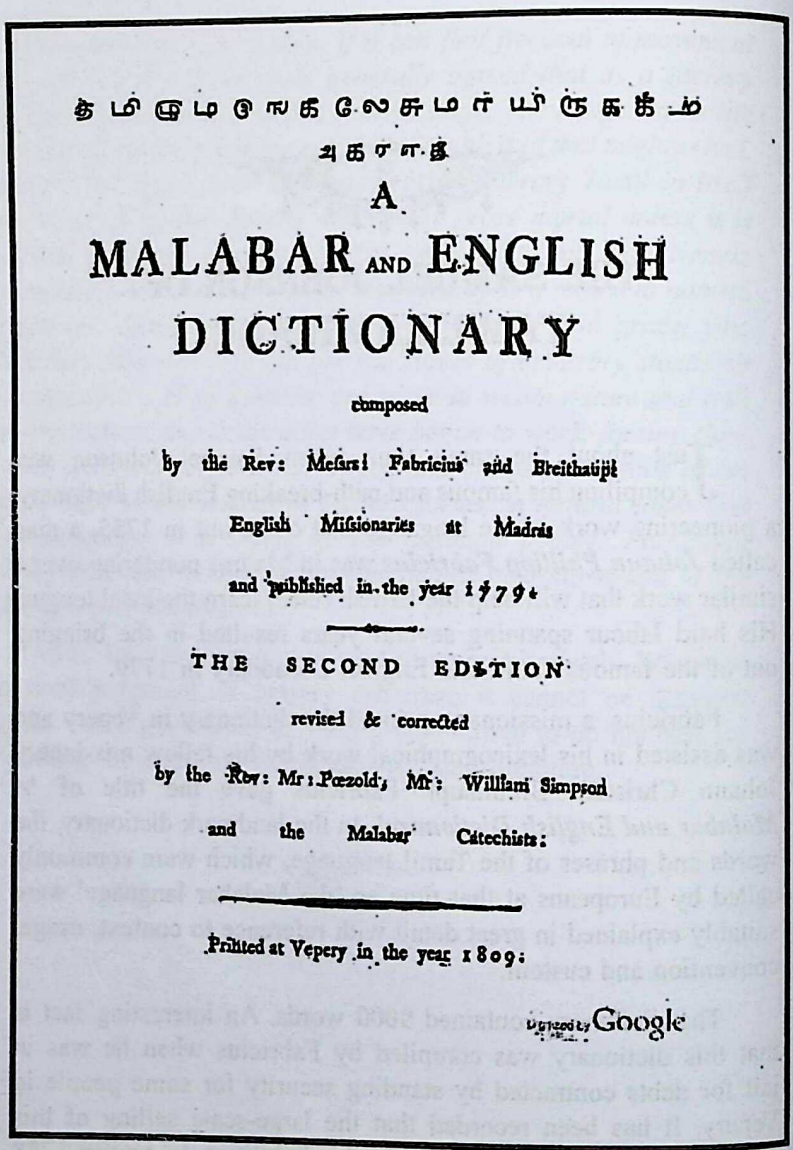

தமிழும் ஸ்கீலேசுமாயிருக்கீம்
அகராத

A

MALABAR AND ENGLISH

DICTIONARY

composed

by the Rev: Messrs: Fabricius and Breithaupt

English Missionaries at Madras

and published in the year 1779.

THE SECOND EDITION

revised & corrected

by the Rev: Mr: Pœzold, Mr: William Simpson

and the Malabar Catechists:

Printed at Vepery in the year 1809.

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The fact that Fabricius's Tamil-English Dictionary became a best-seller gave him a good standing with the English East India Company at Fort St George. His dictionary was dedicated to 'The Court of Directors of the English East India Company'.

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A DICTIONARY
MALABAR AND ENGLISH.

தமிழும்ஈகிலேசுமாயிருககீற

அகராதி

* IS THE SIGN OF GRANDAM WORDS BECOME USUAL IN THE MALABAR LANGUAGE.

அ

அக அக அக அகி அகு

அகஙகை, the palm of the hand.

அகடவிகடம்பண்ணுகிறது, to frustrate a business by tricks, to play fast and loosely.

அகடு, wickedness, wrong. அகடுநினைககிறது, to have evil thoughts or wicked intentions. அகடுபண்ணுகிறது, to vex. அகடுள்ளவன், அகடன் (*fem.* அகடி) a wicked or deceitful person.

அகடு, the belly, the middle part of the body.

அகடடுகிறது, to distend or spread. காலகளை அகடிஸ்வன், one who straddles, one who stands or sits with the feet removed far from each other.

அகணி, the fibres of Palmyra or Coconut-branches of which the Natives of India make ropes.

* அகணடம், very wide and large. அகணடமாய், far and wide.

அகணடுபோகிறது, to widen, to become wide. அகணடிருககிறது, to be wide. அகணடவாய், a wide or large mouth.

அகததி, *the name of a tree whose leaves serve for pot-herbs, bearing a white flower.* சேவ அகததி, *another kind, bearing red flowers.* சிறறகததி, *another kind, having smaller leaves.*

அகததுகிறது, to put away, to remove. அகததுதல், அகததுகை, putting away; removal.

அகநதை, pride, insolence, petulancy. அகநதையுள்ளவன், அகநதைககாரன், a proud man, an insolent man.

அகப்படுகிறது, to be had, got or found, to come into one's reach or possession; to be caught or insnared. அதுஎனககுகப்பட்டுது, I have got it. அகப்படாதவஸதது, a thing not to be had. மோசததிலஅகப்படுகிறது, to fall into danger. கணணியிலஅகப்படுகிறது, to be caught in a snare. அகப்படுததுகிறது, to cause to be insnared; to intangle one in difficulties or perplexities.

அகப்பை, a large kitchen-spoon.

அகமன், a cruel or atrocious man.

அகம், a house; the inner part. அகததடுமை, a slave of the house. அகததமயாள், the mistress of the house, the land-lady. அகப்பொருள், house hold-stuff. அசலகததாள், a neighbour, one that lives close by.

(அகம், corn, grain.) அகவிலை, the price of the grain. அகஙகுறையது, the grain grows dear. அகமஏறுது, the grain grows cheap.

அகமமலர்நதமுகம், a friendly countenance charming looks. அகமலர்சசி, joy.

அகமபுடி, *the name of a tribe.* அகமபுடியான் (*fem.* அகமபுடிசசி) one of that tribe.

அகரம், a street of Bramins.

அகராதி, a dictionary.

அகலம், broad; the breadth. அகலமாககிறது, to enlarge. அகலஙகுறைககிறது, to make narrower or smaller. அகலககட்டை, அகலககுறைசசல், narrow, small.

அகலிடம், the terrestrial globe, the earth.

அகலுகிறது, அகலப்போகிறது; அகனறுபோகிறது, to give way; to go away; to march off in haste. அகனறுபோனவன், a backslider. அகலிநிறகிறது, to stand afar off. அகலுகை, declining from the way.

அகல், a little earthen lamp.

அகாரம், the letter A.

அகாலம், அவகாலம், an unseasonable time. அகாலமழை, an unseasonable rain.

அகிர், uncleanness found upon the head.

அகில், அகர், *the name of a tree.* அகிலககட்டை, அகர்ககட்டை, *the wood of it yielding a sweet scent.*

அகிள், அகிழ், அகர்ததி, a ditch. அகிளைவெட்டுகிறது, to dig a ditch. அகிளைககட்டுகிறது, to lay out a ditch with brick or stone. அகிளைததுறககிறது, to fill up a ditch.

* அகிறனை, the neuter gender.

* அகிறதம், அகிறதியம். அகிறததியம்

அகுதி, a poor miserable man. அகுதியைப்படிதது

A

Plate 4.2: First page of the second edition of Johann Philipp Fabricius & Johann Christian Breithaupt's *A Malabar and English dictionary* (Vepery, 1809).

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Fabricius wrote:

'The confidence which we have, that it will be of use to such Gentlemen in Your Honours Civil and Military Employs in the Carnatic, as may be pleased to make themselves acquainted with the language of the natives and consequently able to understand them without trusting to interpreters, encourages us to present this dictionary to the Court of Directors of the English East India Company.'

The second edition of Fabricius's dictionary appeared in 1809. A third edition was issued from Tranquebar in 1897. It is referred to as the Tranquebar Dictionary.

Fabricius came to Madras in 1752 He was with the Danish Mission in Madras and lived in St Thomas Mount. Later, the English Government in Fort St George made him in charge of the Roman Catholic Church and all its surrounding buildings situated in Vepery.

The press at Vepery was first used for issuing proclamations for the East India Company, pamphlets and calendars for the missionaries. The earliest Vepery printed items are a single-sheet Powers of Attorney in English issued in 1764 to the Portuguese in Madras. The British Museum has in its collection a calendar printed at Vepery in 1766 called **'CALENDAR FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD MDCCLXVII (1767)'**

The next striking development was that Fabricius and Breithaupt acquired a new press for Tamil printing from Tranquebar. A printer called Thomas came from there to work in the Tamil printing press. The Tamil letters of the Vepery Press had much in common with those of the Tranquebar and Colombo Tamil Press of the time. A small Catechism in Tamil by Fabricius was issued by the new Vepery Tamil Press in 1779. The first important Tamil work by Fabricius called Malabar New Testament was printed for sale and distribution in the same year.

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HE LIVED FOR TAMIL TILL DEATH

'Tamil is a developed language in terms of its great and glowing poetry. Its prose is in its infancy. I fervently hope that ....will inspire Tamil writers to bring out new works of Tamil prose'

These were the words of Johann Peter Rottler, a German from Stasbourg on the French side of the Franco-German border, who came to Madras in 1818 and stayed back for 18 years in Vepery.

Though *Rottler* (1749-1836) belonged to the Lutheran Mission in Tranquebar, his work in Madras related to the development of Tamil. He was the man behind the Encyclopaedic Dictionary in Tamil that was named after him.

A master of several languages like Portuguese, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Telugu and Tamil, he revised a good chunk of 'A Dictionary of the Tamil, English Languages' by Johann Peter Rottler Part I. After his death, the editorship was taken over by William Taylor and T Venkatachala Moodelly, who were assisted by Andrew Robertson, Lawrence Haubroe and Spershneider in revising the manuscript.

The subsequent volumes - Part II, III and IV of the dictionary - appeared in 1837, 1839 and 1841 respectively, with a total of 1435 pages, and 36,109 entries.

Rottler's Dictionary covered areas of astrology, mythology and science and it was a spectacular attempt to improve upon past

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endeavours. He showed the syntactic function of items, including verb paradigms, and provided referenced sentential exemplification of their use from a variety of sources, including proverbs.

In the introduction Rottler stated: *'The plan of the work is philosophical; referring all words, as nearly as possible, to their roots, or primitives or simplest forms '. Very often a word, or phrase will be found explained, but in English and Tamil. 'It should be understood that the compiler intends the Dictionary to assist Natives, as well as Europeans; so that, on looking for a word, they might find it explained in their own language.'*

Rottler Dictionary was a very popular Encyclopaedic Dictionary on account of the utility of its scholarship, the practicality and accessibility of the information it contained. It was the first to group headwords as lexical roots, and give sub-headings, and as such was a major contribution to Tamil lexicography.

Rottler acknowledged the debt he owed to Costanzo Beschi's Caturakarati and Dictionarium Tamulico-Latinum (Tamil-Latin Dictionary) as well as to Louis-Noel de Bourzes' Dictionnaire Tamul Francoi (Tamil-French Dictionary).

However, the mission of Rottler was well explained by his words: *'Any Tamil Dictionary is full of words. How they are used in speech and writing that makes all the difference. Tamil is a developed language in terms of its great and glowing poetry. Its prose is in its infancy. I fervently hope that Dictionaries of this kind will inspire Tamil writers to bring out new works of Tamil Prose'.*

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AN INCOMPARABLE TAMIL LEXICOGRAPHER

Tamil scholarly world was dominated by **Prof S Vaiyapuri Pillai** (1891-1956) during the 30s and 40s of the 20th century. His Himalayan erudition was never questioned even by his bitterest critics who were intolerant of his views in fixing a later date than what was assumed to be true for some of the great classics like Thirukkural. The mantle of leadership in the field of editing the age-old Tamil classics seems to have passed from the hands of Dr U. V. Swaminatha Iyer to Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai beginning from the early 1920s. His painstaking collection of manuscripts from different areas of Tamil Nadu and editing them with great fidelity to truth made him a worthy successor to Dr U. V. Swaminatha Iyer. Like his illustrious predecessors, Vaiyapuri Pillai had many great admirers. But quite unlike them, he had many critics also.

Vaiyapuri Pillai was born on 20th October 1891 at Tirunelveli. His father Saravanaperumal Pillai was a devout Saivaite, besides being a great lover of Tamil. He studied at St Xavier' High School, Palayankottai and Hindu College at Tirunelveli. He graduated from the Christian College, Madras. In Tamil he stood first in the whole Presidency of Madras and won the coveted *'Sethupathi Gold Medal'*. The illustrious Maraimalai Adigal (then known as R. S. Vedachalam Pillai) was his Tamil teacher in Madras Christian College. In 1915, he went to study Law at Trivandrum.

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He practiced Law at Trivandrum for the next 7 years. During this time he was a regular contributor of learned articles to scholarly journals in English and Tamil which were all noticed by eminent men of letters all over India.

Perhaps his writings helped him in securing the post of one of the sub-editors of Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras in 1924. Miron Winslow's 'A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary' (Madras, 1862), together with G. U. Pope's revisions, formed the starting point for the new Lexicon. This work is a standing monument of Vaiyapuri Pillai's Lexicographical scholarship. In this gigantic task, he had the very valuable assistance of no less a person than M. Raghava Iyengar of Ramanathapuram, an erudite scholar nurtured and fostered by Ṛandithurai Thevar of the 4th Madurai Tamil Sangam.

Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai successfully completed the Tamil Lexicon over a period of 12 years from 1924 to 1936. Volume I Part I of the Tamil Lexicon appeared in 1924 and Volume VI Part V of the Lexicon in 1936. The number of headwords exceeded 104,000 in more than 4000 pages. In this context, it has to be remembered that this great and historic project had begun as early as in 1913 with J. S. Chandler as Chief Editor and M. Raghava Iyengar as Chief Pundit. After the retirement of Chandler in 1922, Anavarathavinayagampillai, C.P. Venkatramaa Iyer and P. S. Subramaniya Sastri acted as Chief Editors. Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai became Chief Editor of the Tamil Lexicon Project in 1926 and completed the work in 1936. The Tamil Lexicon was a serious attempt at a scholarly reference dictionary, based on extraction of material from literary sources for illustrative citations of use. It is still the most comprehensive dictionary available. Entries are given in Tamil with a Romanization, followed by syntactic classification, origin and derivation, cognates, with loans identified by their source languages, the meaning in English and referenced citations from classical literature.

Vaiyapuri Pillai also took effective steps to tap sources of local usage. The public were invited to cooperate and many people

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sent in collections of words. The Sangams at Madurai, Thanjavur, Chidambaram, Jaffna and elsewhere, the Tamil Academy at Chennai (Madras) and the Saiva Sabha at Palayankottai and other bodies were asked to help in collecting local usages, particularly relating to castes, social customs, occupations, trades, tools and utensils, medicines, music, technical terms, religious rites, and beliefs, and terms occurring in manuscripts, documents, etc. Institutions like Dharmapura Aadeenam, Madurai Aadeenam, Tiruvaduḍurai Aadeenam and Thiruppanandal Aadeenam were also requested to send in words in traditional use particularly with reference to Saiva Sidhantha and to hereditary establishments.

Prof Vaiyapuri Pillai clarified that the aims of his Lexicon were as follows:

a) to satisfy the Tamil Scholars of the use of orthodox style by the elucidation of rare usages and technical terms used in literature;

b) to satisfy the ideal of Western Scholarship by showing the philological relations of Tamil with other languages and, taking cognizance of the socio-linguistic and pedagogic demands of potential users and those competent in English;

c) to give word definitions in chronological order, and to refine definitions in Tamil and English;

d) to provide supplementary denotative or connotative information, and to show the development of senses over time.

Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai admitted that *'in the present state of linguistic research in the Dravidian languages, the last two purposes can hardly be fulfilled'.*

A major critic of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai was the litterateur and philologist G. Devaneya Pavanar (1902-1981), whose 'A critical survey of the Madras University Tamil Lexicon' offered devastating censure on its composition, advocating extreme prescription as the appropriate alternative to the descriptive approach of the Lexicon.

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According to him the definitions in the Lexicon were inaccurate, inadequate and inexhaustive.

Prof Vaiyapuri Pillai served in the Tamil Terms Committee (1941-46) set up by the Government of Madras. At the Oriental Conference held at Nagpur in 1946, Vaiyapuri Pillai presided over the Dravidian Section and presented an English paper 'Research in Dravidian Languages'. During 1951-54, he served as Prof of Tamil at Travancore University. He rendered great service by finding out novel methods to compile the Dictionary of Sangram Phrases. On his retirement in September 1954, he settled at Adyar in Madras. His total works, published during his life time, numbered 40. He began his work with the editing of Manonmaniam of Prof P Sundaram Pillai in 1922 and ended with the first 1000 poems of Divya Prabandham in 1955. Kambaramayanam was his passion and he was very keen on bringing out a definitive edition of Kambaramayanam. But unfortunately he passed away on 17th February, 1956 even as he was planning to undertake this work.

All the great Tamil scholars of his time have spoken about his capacity for brilliant conversation. As a talker, he was incomparable. His wit was verbal and cumulative. His words came in short, sharp bursts of precisely aimed, concentrated fire, as image, pun, metaphor, parody, seemed spontaneously to generate one another in a succession of marvelously imaginative patterns, sometimes rising to high, wildly comical fantasy. His unique accent, idiom, voice, the structure of his sentences, became a magnetic model which affected the style of speech, writing and perhaps feeling of many who came under his spell. Indeed he was a liberating force in the enervating world of Tamil scholarship.

His personal collection of valuable research material over 4500 (Tamil-2943; English, French and German-1543; Sanskrit-113; Malayalam-16) and over 300 palm leaf manuscripts were donated by his legal heirs and became the priceless possession of the National Library at Calcutta. The name of Vaiyapuri Pillai will last for ever in the annals of Tamil Literature.

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CRUSADE THROUGH MEDIA IS OVER A CENTURY-OLD TRADITION

If popular magazines crusading for social and political causes and exposing corruption look like a modern day phenomenon, a flipping of the pages of history reveals that it was a tradition that began in the 19th century itself and that the southern city of Madras had been the seat of such journalistic practices.

In fact, after the consolidation of British power in South India in the first quarter of the 19th century, thanks to the initiative taken by early missionaries, many of whom were great Tamil scholars, many new journals in Tamil came into existence between1860 and 1900.

One such monthly called **Janavinodhini**, which first appeared in January, 1870, took up the legendary case of Vedanayagam Pillai, one of the pioneers in Tamil novel writing, and helped him get justice.

Vedanayagam Pillai was a district munsif in Thanjavur District when he was suspended by a corrupt and unscrupulous English judge. Janavinodhini carried on a campaign on behalf of Vedanayagam Pillai and after a few year, the munsif was reinstated in service without any loss of honour or service benefits.

That, however, is just one of the stories that mark the success of **Janavinodhini**, which had printed on its cover page the legend 'A Popular Magazine of Amusing and Instructive Information in Tamil'.

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ஞானபோதினி.

ஒருமாதாந்தத் தமிழ்ப் பத்திரிகை.

தாமின் புறுவ துலகின் புறக்கண்டு
காமுறுவர் கற்றறிந் தார்—திருக்குறள்.

ஸம்புடம் I.] ஆகஸ்டுமீ 20உ. [புத்தகம் I.

விஷயங்கள்.

பத்திராதிபர் விஞ்ஞாபனம்.

மதிவாணன் கதை I.—வி. கோ. சூரியநாராயண சாஸ்திரியார், பி. எ.

தமிழின் நிலைமை I.—மு. முத்துராமலிங்கம் பிள்ளை, பி. எ.

சில இலக்கண விவாதங்கள் I.—திருமயிலை-வித்வான் சண்முகம்பிள்ளை.

சிவப்பிரகாச-சுவாமிகள் சிறு நூலாராய்ச்சி I.—சருக்கை-இராமசாமி ஐயங்கார்.

ஒரு விநோத சம்பாஷணை I.—பூர்ணலிங்கம் பிள்ளை, பி. எ.

பத்திராதிபர்:— பூர்ணலிங்கம் பிள்ளை, பி. எ.

சென்னை:
தாம்ஸன் அண்டு கம்பெனியாரால்
பதிப்பிக்கப்படுகின்றது.

1897.

முதல் இதழ். ஆகஸ்டு 20, 1897. (பிரிட்டிஷ் நூலகம்)

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Another great Tamil scholar, K. Namasivayam, used to contribute regular articles on pedagogy and education to *Janavinodhini,* which were appreciated by the Director of Public Instruction, Government of Madras. Later these articles were compiled and published in the form of a book, which was prescribed as a text book for college and high school students.

Stories from the Ramayana were serialized month after month for several years. The full text of Kambaramayana was printed for the first time only in **Janavinodhini.** The editor of **Janavinodhini** was A. A. Muthiah, who was the younger brother of A. A. Krishna Pillai, the famous author of 'Irakshanya Yatrigam'.

The Administrative Report of the Government of Madras hailed this journal as *'a voice of the people', 'by the people', 'for the people'.*

What is more interesting is that the journal was published by the Madras School, Book and Vernacular Literature Society in Vepery. It was priced at 2 annas per issue and printed by H W Laurie at the C K S Press, Vepery, which had printed several editions of the Bible and the Old Testament and the New Testament starting from the year 1841.

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A NEW ERA MONTHLY JOURNAL IN TAMIL FROM CHOOLAI

An interesting fact of cultural history of South India from 1860 to 1910 relates to an explosion in the emergence and fall of hundreds of newspapers, journals, periodicals, monographs and socio-religious tracts in Tamil. The relaxation of the draconian provisions of the Vernacular Press Act resulted in a form of cultural renaissance in the old Madras Presidency. A monthly Tamil journal called **Janapriyan** was started by K. Krishnaswamy Aiyar at Choolai, Madras on 1 June 1900. He was the editor, printer and publisher of this journal.

The purpose of this journal was outlined on the first page of They proudly declared:

'Our mission is to function as an instrument of public information, public enlightenment and public welfare. Eternal vigilance is the price of public welfare. We will be publishing features and articles which can be classified under three heads: i) The scientific; ii) The imaginative or speculative; and iii) The Literary. Besides we will be concentrating on public needs and public issues of local, provincial, national and international significance. Our growth and survival lie in our readers' hands.'

Thanks to the new tradition of public service created in Bengal by men like Iswar Chand Vidhyasagar, Surendranath Banerjee and Romesh Chandra Dutt on the one hand and similar tradition established by Mahadev Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopalakrishna Gokhale in Bombay, there was a new

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பு-க.] ஜூன் ௧௯௦௦. [இ-க.

ஜனப்பிரியன்.

மாதமொருமுறை வெளியாகும்.

பொருள் அட்டவணை.

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வருஷத்துக்குச் சந்தா [தபாலகூலி யுளபட] ரூபா. 2 4 0.

இது முதல் இதழ். ஜூன், 1900 (பிரிட்டீசு நூலகம்)

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atmosphere of public awakening about public issues throughout the country. Madras Presidency was no exception to it. In several articles in **Janapriyan**, public activities of these great men of India were highlighted with great aplomb in a felicitous Tamil style.

After the explosive session of the Indian National Congress at Surat in 1907, the next session was held at Madras in 1908. V. Krishnaswamy Aiyar and P. R. Sundaram Aiyar were the main organisers of this session. As a lover of Tamil literature and as one deeply involved in the promotion of Tamil journalism, V. Krishnaswamy Aiyar asked K. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, the Editor of **Janapriyan** to supply 1000 copies of the journal for free public distribution at the time of the Congress Session. In this issue in a leading article the Editor of **Janapriyan** wrote: 'We can now say with confidence that **Janapriyan** means not only a lover of the people but also one who is beloved of the people.'

This was how the cover page of the first issue of **Janapriyan** dated 1 June, 1900, looked. (see previous page)

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REMEMBERING VALLALAR

Every year, a festival dedicated to the sacred memory of Vallalar and Mahatma Gandhi is being celebrated in Chennai under the auspices of Ramalingar Pani Mandram and AVM Charities.

The moving spirit behind this grand festival for more than 45 years has been and still is Arutchelvar N. Mahalingam. a great son of India. Ably assisting him in spreading the everlasting spiritual message of Vallalar is Ooran Adigal. No one can dispute the fact that what Swami Vivekananda was to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Ooran Adigal is to Vallalar Swamigal.

In this context it is interesting to see that Vallalar during his lifetime had announced the starting of a magazine called **Sanmarga Viveka Viruthi** in 1865. Ooran Adigal started a magazine in 1969 retaining the original name given by Vallalar.

The front cover page of the issue of Sanmarga Viveka Viruthi edited by Ooran Adigal states that Vallalar started this magazine in the 19th century. This information has been duly incorporated below the title of the magazine.

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THE COLOSSAL COLUMBUS OF CLASSICAL TAMIL MOVEMENT

I congratulate the Government of Tamilnadu and its irrepressible Chief Minister, himself a no mean scholar in Classical Tamil, for having converted the humble cottage of **Parithimal Kalaignar** (V. G. Suryanarayana Sastri 1870-1903) in Vilacheri village near Madurai City, into a memorial and also for having sanctioned a sum of Rs 15 lakh towards nationalising the books authored by Parithimal Kalaignar. All the lovers of Classical Tamil have whole-heartedly welcomed this initiative of Tamilnadu Government because Parithimal Kalaignar was the first Tamilian to raise his full-throated vibrant voice of demand to declare Tamil as a classical language as early as in 1902, when the University of Madras planned to remove Tamil from the syllabus.

Government of Tamilnadu, especially Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister, had succeeded in persuading the wooden UPA Government to declare Tamil as a Classical Language in 2005. I understand that the Government of India have since sanctioned an amount of Rs 5 crore for the promotion of Classical Tamil and that an amount of Rs 3 crore has so far been spent by Tamilnadu Government towards this noble and worthy cause. I fully endorse the view of Dr. Avvai Natarajan, former Secretary to Government of Tamilnadu (Tamil Culture and Tamil Development) and former Vice Chancellor of Tamil University, Thanjavur in this context: 'While I congratulate the Government of Tamilnadu for having taken the initiative to declare the ancestral home of Parithimal Kalaignar near Pasumalai in Madurai as a Memorial, yet this initiative will come to full fruition only when

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the Government of Tamilnadu moves the Government of India to give total financial assistance to the tune of Rs100 crore to begin with to establish an Indian Institute of Classical Tamil in Chennai City and houses it in a building to be named as 'PARITHIMAL KALAIGNAR BUILDING'. This new Institute should serve the cause of promotion of Classical Tamil and Classical Tamil Literature like the French Academy in France founded by Cardinal de Richelieu (1585-1642) in 1635".

The French Academy consists of forty Members, known as immortels (Immortals). New Members are elected by the Members of the Academy itself. Academicians hold office for life, but they may be removed for misconduct. This Body has the task of acting as an official authority on the French Language. The French Academy is charged with publishing an official dictionary of the language. Its rulings, however, are only advisory; not binding on either the public or the government or the nation.

Parithimal Kalaignar was sent for his secondary school education and the first course in Arts in the Madurai College. Later, he went to Madras and joined the Christian College. He soon became a favourite pupil of the reputed Rev Dr Miller, Principal of that college and took his BA degree in 1893 Rev Dr Miller wished to offer Sastri a Lecturerership in philosophy in his college. But the young man preferred a Tamil Pundit's position, though the latter position carried a lower salary and status. He was the first man in the history of this land to make such a choice. Parithimal Kalaignar taught to a handful of students, twelve (12) in number. He used to say that Chirst and Sankara had twelve disciples (12), leaving us to infer what he meant. Like the 9 Gems in the Royal Court of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, these 12 students of Parithimal Kalaignar became very eminent and famous in the field of education, literature and letters.

The twelve (12) were:

N. Balarama Iyer,

V. S. Shanmugham Pillai,

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C. N. Saravan Mudaliar,
S. Ramaswami Iyengar,
S. Varadachari,
S. Sundarachari,
Salasalochana Chettiar,
J. Vasudeva Pantulu,
Pranatartihara Sivan,
Subrahmanya Achari,
S. Muthiah Mudaliar,
K. R. Srinivasa Iyaegar.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyaegar became one of the foremost Professors of English Literature in post-independent India.

As years passed, his range of literary activities grew wider and wider. When Parithimal Kalaignar died in 1903, M.S. Purnalingam Pillai paid this tribute to him: *"During the 10 years after his graduation in 1892, not a moment passed without my seeing Parithimal Kalaignar do something or other to develop or diffuse Classical Tamil Language and Literature. His enthusiasm for Tamil knew no bound."*

Sastri boldly wrote the first tragic drama Mana Vijayam in Tamil and caused a great shock to the orthodox conservatives in the Tamil literary world. His incessant activity started telling on his health. He had contracted tuberculosis. He fought valiantly against the disease but finally succumbed to it, on the 2 November 1903, at the age of 33. Indeed the world of Tamil literature had seen a great meteor rise and pass, leaving an incredible and unmatched career as a splendid memory in the glorious history of Tamil Language and Literature.

More than a century has passed since Parithimal Kalagnar's death. Whatever be the final judgment of history, no one can ever dispute the fact that he was indeed a colossal Columbus in the virgin ground of promotion of Classical Tamil Language and Literature in the last decade of the 19th century.

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10

ETERNAL FLAME OF NATIONALISM NAY, RATHER UNIVERSALISM

Every year on 11 December, the world celebrates the 125th birth anniversary of the great bard of Tamil Renaissance and Indian Nationalism. 'Mahakavi' Bharathi was a peerless, poet of Tamil Renaissance during the early chase of our struggle for freedom.

Even as Mahatma Gandhi gave moral grandeur and greatness to our struggle for freedom, **'Mahakavi' Bharathi** added poetry and grace to it and so much so that his songs were on the lips of every revolutionary and freedom fighter in this part of the country during those exciting and soul-stirring times.

A wise man once wrote for all time when he said 'Let me write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws'. For, the songs of today lay down the laws of tomorrow and that is why the great English poet P.B. Shelley (1792-1822) said that *"The poets are indeed the unacknowledged legislators of the world"*. The poet blazes the trail, which the politicians follow, plodding along.

In India's struggle for independence, the banner of freedom was gloriously held aloft by a gallant galaxy of poet - patriots, two of whom stand foremost, Tagore and Bharathi. Shelley also said that poets learn in suffering what they

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teach in song. The patriot in Bharathi writhed in agony, under the oppressive yoke of foreign rule and the poet in him, burst out in song, that was at once a call and a challenge. His words were power and his songs were fire; his music moved the people to mutiny and roused them to revolt.

His famous song:

"as a heart cannot bear"

("நெஞ்சு பொறுக்குதிலையே")

is a scathing indictment of the slavish life to which the people of his time had got themselves reconciled to in a spirit of helpless resignation . Mahakavi Bharathi lamented in sorrow "Obsessed with fear, and laden with sorrows, they (our common people) had fallen prey to a thousand superstitions. They shuddered at the very sight of a sepoy and skulked away when someone carrying a pistol passed by.

In docile servility and cowardly sycophancy, they meekly got up to pay dutiful homage to anyone who dressed with flamboyance and walked with a swagger. The heart cannot bear to see these great people torn by strife and disunity, petty differences and squeamish disputes setting even the son against the father and sowing the seeds of a feud, that was to cast its shadow for generations to come."

His poem titled ***"Poli Swadeshigal"*** on the pretentious patriots and presumptuous heroes, rings with biting denunciation of deceit and revels in the exposure of hypocrisy. The dumb driven masses who had sold themselves to slavery, the false crowd that indulged in facile talk and heroic fibs to cover and camouflage their cowardice, the crowd that talked when it should have toiled, that feared where it should have fought and sighed where it should have struggled, the crowd that grovelled in the dust and revelled in its own impotence, that was the crowd that Bharathi singed with his sarcasm and scorched with his scorn through his

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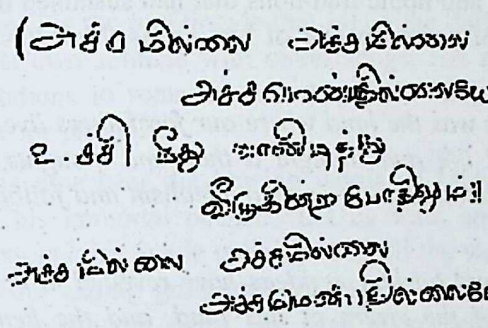
immortal poems. He called upon the people to shed fear and fight falsehood.

"Even were the skies to fall on your head, have no fear"



was the message of courage, this Crusadar against injustice put in his song, which was also the saga of sacrifice. Even as Mahakavi Bharathi struggled to destroy the false values that had corroded society and corrupted men's minds, hearts and souls, he sought to build up new values, to forge and fashion new bonds of sympathy, understanding and love. He was a poet with a hate of hate, scorn of scorn and love of love.

Through his great poetry Mahakavi Bharathi made it clear that when we drink deep at this fountain of love, that we feel that, out of clay we have been made into men and from men we have risen with gods. According to Mahakavi Bharathi it is this gospel of love that binds the highest with the humblest, the lowest with the loftiest and creates a common comradeship that can be strengthened by common endeavour and unity of purpose. It is in the raptures of this love that Mahakavi Bharathi sings of the oneness of all, that all are one kin and all one kind, all the people of this great and ancient land.

He pleaded for a Society that will rise above its class, that will refuse to demean itself into divisions of caste, that will respect the tiller and the toiler and will no longer burn incense to the idle rich, a society where virtue shall be strength and earnest endeavour seek to promote the abiding good—this is the new

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order of which Mahakavi Bharathi dreamt, for which he worked and prayed.

The India of his dreams would have its roots in the past, in the rich culture and noble traditions that had sustained the country for thousands of years. In one of his poems, Mahakavi Bharathi declared:

> *"This was the land where our forefathers lived a happy, purposeful life and thought a thousand thoughts, fertile in their imagination, rich in their idealism and faithful in their realism.*
>
> *Shy and bashful maidens have revelled in the cheering coolness of the rivers of this land, and the benign moon beamed with joy at their virgin delights. These damsels had ripened into womanhood to fulfil themselves as mothers and with the sweet words; they spoke, fed their babies with the wisdom of our land. This was the land studded with temples that rose high, offering unto the Gods the humble gratitude of men for the life of fullness and fulfillment that they lived here."*

To quote the beautiful words of K. Diraviam "But Bharathi was no poet of the past; he was indeed a poet of the future and heralded an era where, enriched with our experiences, we should march forward towards fresh advances in every sphere of life. Love of ancient culture and the yearning for modern progress met and mingled in Bharathi's melody.

"There was no use", he counselled,
"in secretly regaling ourselves
with colourful tales of the prosperous past."

(மறைவாக நமக்குள்ளே பழங்
கதைகள் சொல்வதிலோர்
மகிமையில்லை.)

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We should catch up with the most progressive advances in arts and sciences, in thought and literature. Our past shall equip us, not envelop us; it shall inspire us, but not imprison us. If Bharathi was an idealist dreamer, he was also a practical planner. He was not like the nightingale that sat in the darkness and sang to cheer its own solitude with sweet songs. His songs were not mere invitations to romance and rhapsody. They were also the blue prints for progress."

Let us now hear the bracing words of Mahakavi Bharathi in one of his immortal poems: "Let us walk amidst the silver snowclad mountains, while our ships sail all the western seas. Let us bridge the gaping gulfs and harness the turbulent waters of Bengal to nourish our crops. We shall delve deep into the land and coax the hidden treasures of the earth to bring us prosperity. We shall dive deep in the Southern seas and fish for pearls as bright as wisdom.

"Let us exchange the tasty wheat grown on the banks of the Ganges for the tender betel leaves of the banks of the Cauveri. We will reward the melodies of the Marathas with the soft, shining ivories of Kerala. We will pay tribute to the glory of the Rajaput heroes, with Mysore Gold. We will have wealth from cotton and silk, and make earth heave with the fulsome weight of the fruits of our labour. We will span the seas and scan the skies; we will watch the stars and probe the Mars. We will cherish the truth and nourish the arts and sing in ecstacy of Bharath, the land of our birth."

In Bharathi's poetry, we can find post-Independent India's Five Year Plans, set to music.

This patriot who spanned our wide country with the poet's metre and measure, who had his feet play with the waters of the seas that met at Kanyakumari, and held his head high amidst the snow-clad Himalayas, swelled with abounding pride and abiding love for the language that lured him to poetry—Tamil. Mahakavi Bharathi is an illustrious example of a nationalist who did not love his country less, but loved his mother tongue Tamil more.

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Let us say and sing along with him **"The mention of Tamilnadu fills our ears with sweet honey.**

(தெந்தமிழ் நாடெனும் போதினிலே,
இன்புத் தேன் வந்து பாயுது காதினிலே!)

The very name of our forefathers breathes into us, a new power. Tamil Nadu, rich in valour and full with the Vedas, where labour and learning unite at the altar of love—this was the land that produced Valluvar and presented him to the world; this, the language that sang of living truths in lilting music; this the people who matched the mountains with their mighty valour, who roamed the seas and planted little Tamil Nadu in lands far far-away, at the back of the beyond."

Bharathi was a true Tamil

And therefore, a great Indian.

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A YOUNG BOY'S DISCOVERY OF BHARATHI'S GENIUS

As a lover of antiquarian books for more than three decades, I can say that Moore Market near Central Station in Chennai was once the Mecca of rare, out of print and unobtainable antiquarian books in English, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and many other languages. During the last two decades its importance in this respect has declined steeply, though there are a few shops still selling some old and rare books. Once, I had the good fortune of laying my hands on an English book printed in Tirunelveli in 1970 and titled "TAMIL STUDIES" (Second Series) by **A.V. Subramania Iyer.** This is a collection of his brilliant essays on great Tamil Poets like Kamban, Mahakavi Bharathi, Kumaraguruparar, Gopalakrishna Bharathi, Saint Ramalinga Swami and many other Tamil Savants and Men of Letters. Dr T. P. Meenakshisundaram, the then Vice Chancellor of Madurai University, in his introduction, paid a rich tribute to A. V. Subramania Iyer for his path-breaking essays on the luminaries of Tamil literature, with particular focus of the impact of Western culture and Western education on the life and literature of the Tamils.

M. Ananthanarayanan, ICS (Chief Justice of Madras High Court), whose father Madaviah was mainly responsible for the introduction of graduate and post-graduate programmes in Tamil in Madras University, in his introduction, said: "It is with a particular sense of pleasure that I write these lines to commend

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this little volume of TAMIL STUDIES by Sri A.V. Subramania Iyer, a veteran scholar in this field. He has that rare balance of the critic, insight and sympathy on the one hand, and sober intellectual restraint on the other. I think that most thoughtful students of Tamil literature will agree with his critical assessments, in substance, of great Tamil Poets, Scholars and Savants."

These essays are intended for the Tamil lovers, especially, the English - knowing Tamilians, who are interested in the authors of their rich literary inheritance. They may be of interest to cultivated non-Tamilians also who have a desire to know something about Tamil poets and scholars. A.V. Subramania Iyer's approach to facts and opinions has been dispassionate and free, as far as possible, from any bias or pedantry.

One of the most important Essays relates to the little known, if not known at all, chapter in the short hectic life of Mahakavi Bharati. I am delighted to see from A.V. Subramania Iyer's book that as a young boy of 18 he had the good fortune of moving closely with Mahakavi Bharati between 1918 and 1919 in Tirunelveli. To him was given the rare and divine opportunity of listening to the voice of Mahakavi Bharati singing his immortal lyrics and nationalist songs at the residence of Sadhu Ganapathi Pantulu who was a staunch nationalist and a leading member of the local Bar in Tirunelveli. Let us hear A.V. Subramania Iyer's account in his own words:

"The life of the great modern Tamil Poet Subramania Bharati from the time he returned from political exile at Pondicherry to Tamil Nadu in 1918 till he went more than a year later to Madras to join the editorial staff of a Tamil Daily constitutes a little known chapter. He lived in Kadayam, his wife's place in Tirunelveli District. But the orthodox atmosphere of the 'agraharam' of that village in those days did not quite suit Bharati, the poet of social revolt. He felt a fish out of water there and used to frequently come to Tirunelveli and other places to avoid the village. I had several opportunities to meet the poet personally at Tirunelveli on many occasions.

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"Bharati used to come to Tirunelveli almost on alternate days and stay with the late Sadhu Ganapati Pantulu who was a staunch nationalist and a leading member of the local bar. Whenever the poet came to his house he was surrounded by a band of admiring youths who were interested in nationalism and Tamil literature. The poet also used to attend a regular gathering of these people held at the Tampiraparani river bed at Vannarpet behind the house of the late Vedanayagam Pillai who was an unobtrusive patriot of those days and an erudite Tamil scholar. There used to be a general discussion on literary and political matters. The poet used to sing his own songs in his impressive voice and keep his hearers spell bound. During nights in his stay at Tirunelveli the poet used to conduct religious classes at the first floor of a building in West Car Street in Tirunelveli Town. This was attended by a select gathering of a dozen people who used to call themselves his 'disciples' and were deeply interested in Yogic philosophy. The meeting was more or less like that of an esoteric circle, which was not open to the general public."

A.V. Subramania Iyer has referred to an interesting incident in which he was involved with Mahakavi Bharati in 1919 and which is worth recalling as reflecting the state of mind of the great poet which many of his friends had noticed at that time. Though Bharati was hailed as a national poet by the people of Tamil Nadu and his patriotic poems were on the lips of Tamilians and sung at many political meetings even in 1919, he had a feeling that his poetic genius had not been sufficiently recognised in the country. He had a sense of disappointment on this score, which was shared by his admirers. That was the time, when the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore had received the Nobel Prize for literature and was at the height of his fame which had become international. Bharati used to compare his own position with the world renown of the great Bangali poet and felt that he had not received his due even in India.

One day in the second half of June, 1919 when Mahakavi Bharati came to the house of **Sadhu Ganapati Pantulu** in Tirunelveli, he was having a copy of the daily 'New India'

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founded by Annie Besant in his hand and was full of elation and joy. Turning to Sadhu Ganapati Pantulu the poet said, **"Look here Sadhu, there is a fine article in this paper on myself. The writer has done justice to my genius"** and handed over the copy to him. The article he referred to was written by A.V. Subramania Iyer, who was just a lad of 18 at that time. A.V. Subramania Iyer also happened to be present on that occasion. Pantulu asked Bharati whether he wanted to see the writer of the article. The poet replied with enthusiasm, **"Certainly, I am prepared to walk even ten miles to see the writer and thank him. This is the first article in English which has recognised my poetical stature".** Pantulu then pointed to A.V. Subramania Iyer, the author of that article, who was sitting there in the same room. Mahakavi Bharati immediately jumped up and hugged A.V. Subramania Iyer and warmly thanked him.

Recalling this incident in 1919, A.V. Subramania Iyer has stated: "The excessive joy which he felt at a newspaper article about him brought out clearly his feeling that his genius had not been adequately recognised. There are instances of poets in other *"languages who become famous in after life having passed through similar moods and"* experiences. Though he was fully confident of his genius he did not disdain name and fame, which were somewhat slow in coming during his lifetime."

The Tamil scholars and Pundits of those days, trained in the old school were somewhat tardy in recognising the genius of Mahakavi Bharati who was revolutionary in his outlook and spoke with a new voice and challenging tone. The Poet was a marked man and considered a dangerous character by the British Government and hence many prudent people who really admired the poet were silent and maintained an attitude of aloofness for their own safety. Only the courageous among the nationalists openly admired his poems and freely moved with the poet and kept him above want. Of course the poet's fame grew in the twenties, thanks to the change in the political atmosphere, brought about by the Gandhian era, but he did not live to enjoy it, as he passed away in 1921.

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A. V. Subramania Iyer has also recorded that Bharati's younger brother Viswanathan visited him in 1969 and presented him with a torn slip of paper which he found among the Mahakavi Bharati's manuscripts, papers and scraps, in which he had written in his own handwriting, 'Very important: Letter to Mrs. Besant, mentioning Mr. A.V. Subramania Iyer (New Street) Tirunelveli Bridge'. He was sure that the name in the slip referred to the author and asked him under what circumstances the poet could have written it. With great humility and reverence, A V Subramania Iyer has recorded: "This note of Bharati is an unexpected documentary confirmation of the incident at the house of Sadhu Ganapathi Pantulu in 1919 described above."

I have read the essay of A. V. Subramania Iyer on Mahakavi Bharati which was published in the 'New India' issue in Madras dated 7 June, 1919. It is a remarkable essay which shows that A.V. Subramania Iyer himself was a great genius even at the age of 18 and that is why he could describe Mahakavi Bharati in these words:

> ***"It seems that the literary conscience of the Tamil land is dead. Elsewhere how could we account for the indifference and lack of appreciation shown, by its own people, towards the greatest of their living poets, one who has given supreme utterance to the longing of our soul for freedom and free play for all its faculties, in exquisitely beautiful and enchantingly melodious songs, that carry with them all the noble impulses, the soothing elements and inspirations for life. ...Mr Subramania Bharati stands the most inspired of living Tamil Poets today. ... He is the supreme poet of the Renaissance in the Tamil land."***

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12

A GREAT TAMIL SAVANT AND GURU OF DR G.U. POPE

Ramanuja Kavirayar was one of the most outstanding Tamil savants of the first half of the 19th century. Living in Madras, now Chennai, which at that time was the scene of the literary labours of several eminent Tamil scholars, many of whom were his own students, he dominated the world of Tamil letters like Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) in the England of 18th century or like Mahavidwan Minakshisundaram Pillai of Thiruvavaduthurai in Southern Tamizhagam in the second half of that 19th century.

In the work of bringing into print Tamil classics for the first time and writing commentaries on some of them Ramanuja Kavirayar was a distinguished pioneer. He was also no mean poet. His greatest service however, was done, like that of Minakshisundaram Pillai, as a teacher of Tamil. He trained a band of fine native Tamil scholars and was a guru or munshi which was the term then current to denote language teachers, to most of the European Tamil scholars of that age who were in Madras between 1820 and 1853 and all of whom have enriched Tamil in many ways.

It is indeed very unfortunate that many essential details relating to Ramanuja Kavirayar's early life are not known. He was born in Ramanathapuram in the eighties of the 18th century. His father was one Rangien as stated in a verse at the end of a Tamil translation of a Sanskrit work called **'Atmabodham.'**

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Dr G. U. Pope (1820 - 1908)

Ramanujam was a contemporary of Ashtavadhanam Peria Saravanaperumal Kavirayar of Ramanathapuram. Both of them learnt Tamil at the feet of Somasundaram Pillai, a deeply learned and religious man, who was one of the 12 personal disciples of the celebrated Sivagnana Swamigal.

Ramanuja Kavirayar was the guru of Dr George Uglow Pope (1820-1908). Dr. G. U. Pope popularly known as Rev. G. U. Pope was a Christian missionary who spent many years in Tamilnadu and translated many Tamil texts into English. His popular translations include 'Tirukkural' and 'Tiruvachagam'. His efforts were recognised by the Royal Asiatic Society in the form of a gold medal. He served as the principal of the Bishop Cotton Boys School, Bangalore, before returning to Oxford in the late 1880s.

Dr Pope has given currency to an interesting story relating to Ramanuja Kavirayar, which throws some light on his early life.

Writing from Oxford in England in 1886, Dr Pope said: 'My first teacher of Tamil (Ramanuja Kavirayar) was a most learned

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scholar long dead (peace to his ashes) who possessed more than any man I have known, the cleverness, ingenium perfervidum. He was a profound and zealous Vaishnavite. I remarked one day about a long white line or scar on his neck, where his rosary of Eleocarpus beads are hung and ventured to ask him (I had to wait for such occasions for the mollia temporafandi) its history.'

Well, said he, 'When I was a boy I could learn nothing. Nothing was clear to me and I could remember nothing. But I felt my whole soul full of intense love of learning. So in despair, I went to a temple of Saraswathi (the goddess of learning) and with a passionate prayer, I cut my throat and fell bleeding at her feet.

In a vision she appeared to me and promised I should become the greatest of Tamil scholars. I recovered, and from that day, by her grace I found all things easy and I am what she said I should be. I believe he was so and from that noble, enthusiastic teacher I learnt to love Tamil and to reverence its ancient professors.

This story of Pope explains in some measure the background for Ramanuja Kavirayar's consciousness of his high mission as a dedicated teacher endowed with a domineering even aggressive nature, which evoked a natural reaction among his compeers.

After a thorough study of Tamil literature and grammar Ramanuja Kavirayar came to Madras in 1820 and settled down as a teacher and man of letters working with single- minded devotion and enthusiasm, till his death in 1853, for the cause of Tamil learning and Tamil culture. He taught Tamil to many students and also published several books of his own and others, for which, it is stated, he had the control of a printing press. He soon gained fame and high reputation for his great scholarship and came to be referred to as Ilakkanakkadal and Iyarramilasiriyar.

Among his many eminent pupils were Visakhaperumal Aiyar and his half-brother Saravanaperumal Aiyar. Vishakaperumal Aiyar attained fame as an editor and commentator and was for several years the head of Tamil Department of the Madras University. Saravanaperumal Aiyar was also an equally well-known scholar,

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blessed with a philosophical bent of mind and such catholicity of outlook that he sang a brilliant NANMANIMALAI on the great Muslim-mystic and Tamil poet Gunangudi Masthan.

Of the European Tamil students, whom Ramanuja Kavirayar taught, Pope, M. Winslow, W. H. Drew and C. T. Rhenius were the most prominent. All of them were Christian missionaries who were devoted to the cause of Tamil studies. He not only taught them Tamil literature and grammar, but also collaborated with them in some of their important works, as they themselves have handsomely acknowledged.

In the preparation of the reputed English-Tamil dictionary of Winslow, Ramanuja Kavirayar played an important role as can be seen from the following words of Winslow from his preface to the work, which was published in 1862: 'In the preparation of this work, the compiler has been aided at different times by competent natives. Of these the first was Ramanuja Kavirayar.'

In the same way, Ramanuja Kavirayar helped W. H. Drew in his English translation of the first two books of the 'Thirukkural' which the Kavirayar himself brought out with his own special notes and Parimelazhagar's gloss.

Coming now to Ramanuja Kavirayar's works, which are in the nature of commentaries, the pride of place should go to that on Nannool, known as Ramanuja Kandigai.

Nannool is a grammatical masterpiece written by Pavanandi Munivar, a Jain ascetic, about the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 14th century AD and has been held in high esteem ever since its appearance by Tamil poets and scholars. Nannool still continues to hold its own as a major work despite the attempts of some purists recently to discredit this work.

By writing an excellent commentary on it and making its knowledge easily available in an intelligible manner to Tamil students Ramanuja Kavirayar rendered a rare and distinct service, especially when we bear in mind the fact that the two earlier commentaries on the Nannool, one by Mylainathar in the 14th

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century and the other by Sankaranamasivaya Pulavar in the 18th century had not then seen the light of day.

The story goes that Visakhaperumal Aiyar (the disciple of Ramanajua Kavirayar) had forestalled his master by publishing an elaborate gloss on Nannool earlier and this somewhat estranged their relationship.

Relating an anecdote about this, in his life of Minakshisundaram Pillai, Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar says that Ramanuja Kavirayar often used to make unfavourable and slighting remarks about Visakhaperumal Aiyar and that at one stage Mazhavai Mahalinga Aiyar, the well known Tamil scholar who was a student of Visakhaperumal Aiyar, had to begin a campaign of retaliation against Ramanuja Kavirayar in order to defend his guru. This anecdote only reveals the human element in great men, who are sometimes not free from minor foibles.

Ramanuja Kavirayar wrote commentaries on the minor ethical works of Athichudi and Konraivendan of Avvaiyar. Though the maxims of Avvaiyar are short, yet some of them, on account of their extreme brevity and enigmatic expression are like Sutras requiring elaborate elucidation which was done with great force and clarity by Kavirayar.

Valuable as his commentaries have been, Ramanuja Kavirayar will be best remembered by his poems, few though they have been. He has written three devotional peoms, Thiruvengadavar Anubhuthi on Lord Venkatesa of Tirupati. Parthasarathy Padampunai Pamalai on God Parthasarathy of Triplicane and Varadarajar Padirrupathanthadi on the Lord of the famous temple of Kanchipuram, in all of which the resonating echoes of the hymns of the great Alwars can be heard.

These poems of Ramanuja Kavirayar are in such simple and beautiful language, expressing fervent 'Bhakti' in a mood of self-surrender to the Lord. If only, he had devoted more time to poetry and composed more works of this kind, he would have been among the notable poets of that age. Some stray poems

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including á Pancharatnamala on Pachaiyappa Mudaliar, the great philanthropist, also stand to the credit of Kavirayar.

Thus, for more than 30 years, Ramanuja Kavirayar was in the forefront of an illustrious band of Tamil scholars of Madras like Thandavaraya Mudaliar, Kanchipuram Sabhapathy Mudaliar, Kazhathur Vedagiri Mudaliar, Purasai Ashtavadhanam Sabhapathy Mudaliar, Ashtavadhanam Veeraswami Chettiar, Thiruvengatachala Mudaliar of Egmore, Visakhaperumal Aiyar and his brother, Mazhavai Mahalingam Aiyar and a host of others, who were the early pioneers in the great and formidable task of bringing the treasures of Tamil language, literature and grammar into print in the modern sense.

Ramanuja Kavirayar was greatly admired by his pupils, and respected by the most distinguished of his scholastic and intellectual opponents. It is a tragedy that he occupied no recognisable official position and founded no school. Perhaps this was so because he simply said and wrote what seemed to him to be exact and true, in his own unemphatic, careful prose, with all the qualifications that the truth seemed to demand.

He did not modify or shape his thought to make it fit into a system. He did not exaggerate or over-schematise in order to obtain or attract attention for his ideas. He had an acute, ironical humour, was obstinate under attack, and could not be either snubbed or bullied. Yet he was courteous, serious and charming, and his movements and words possessed a dignity and humanity wholly unrelated to the popular image of him in the last 30 years of his life.

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13

A PIONEER IN TAMIL AND TAMIL LITERATURE FROM JAFFNA

C.W. **Damodaram Pillai** (1832-1901) is noted for his unstinted glorious tribute to a new and emerging Tamil Scholar Parithimal Kalaignar (V. Ko. Suryanarayana Sastry) in1901.

C. W. Damodaram Pillai was able to identify and appreciate the original genius of Parithimal Kalaignar because he himself was an original genius. One among the greatest pioneers in editing the ancient Tamil Classics was C. W. Damodaram Pillai who lived in the 19th century and who was an elder contemporary of Dr U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, popularly known as *'Tamizh Thatha'*. Damodaram Pillai belongs to the band of outstanding Jaffna Tamil scholars in the latter half of the 19th Century and is rated as next in importance only to Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879) who exercised a considerable influence over him and his literary work.

Damodaram Pillai was born in September 1832 at Ciruppatti Village in Jaffna. His father Wairavanatha Pillai was a Saivite Vellala of pious disposition. As a young boy Damodaram learnt his Tamil at the feet of Sunnakam Muthukumaraswami Pillai, a reputed scholar of great academic

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distinction rooted in age-old Tamil traditions of Jaffna. He later joined an English School run by Christian Missionaries where he completed his school education in 1852. After working as a Teacher in a local School for some time, he came to Madras in 1854. In 1855, Damodaram Pillai took up the Editorship of the Dinavarthamani, a Tamil Daily of that time. He took up this job at the instance of Rev. Percival, a Christian Missionary and Tamil Scholar. He appears to have been Adviser to Madras Government on matters relating to Tamil. It is stated that at this time Damodaram Pillai had leanings towards Christianity, but later he swung back to the faith of his forefathers and became a staunch Saivite, thanks to Arumuga Navalar.

Damodaram Pillai's Tamil scholarship and attainments became known to the larger public through the innovative way in which he conducted the newspaper *Dinavarthamani*. When the Madras University was established in 1857, he was one among the first Graduates produced by this University. He was appointed as a Tamil Lecturer in the Presidency College. He then served for some time as a Lecturer in Government College at Calicut and later joined the Secretariat Service, from which he retired in 1884. Even while he was in service, Damodaram Pillai had taken in 1871 the B. L. Degree of Madras University and qualified himself for Law. After retirement he practiced Law at Kumbakonam. Subsequently, he was for some time Judge of the Pudukkottah Chief Court. After his service in Pudukkottah State was over, he moved to Madras where he lived till his death on January 1, 1901. During this period he was connected with the Madras University as a member and Chairman of the Tamil Board of Studies and an Examiner in Tamil for Degree Courses. He was a founder of the Madras Suguna Vilasa Sabha the famous Amateur Dramatic Society and its President for some time.

Though Damodaram Pillai had been a Journalist, Teacher and Civil Servant, his main hobby all through his life was his total involvement in Tamil Studies, to which he was passionately devoted. He longed to serve the cause of Tamil and do something big and which others had not done before. Tamil scholars before

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his day had begun the work of bringing into print such well known works as Tirukkural, Naladiyar, Kamban's Ramayana and many religious books. Among grammatical works Nannool of Pavanandi, which was the most popular grammar at that age and the Ezhuthathikaram of Tholkappiyam had been printed. Damodaram Pillai entered this field of labour, actuated by a burning desire to bring out good editions of ancient Tamil classics, especially on grammar. In order to achieve this lofty aim, he labored hard, gathering palm leaf manuscripts from different parts of South India. He assiduously and carefully examined and studied those ancient palm leaf manuscripts for a decade from 1880 to 1890 and brought out many works, most of which were printed for the first time. In every sense of the word he was a great Pioneer and worthy Precursor of Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer in the field of retrieval, re-editing and reprinting of ancient Tamil Classics.

Damodaram Pillai's most notable achievement was the editing of Tholkappiyam with Nachinarkiniyar's commentary. Tholkappiyam is generally considered to be the most ancient complete and whole single work in Tamil now extant. It is a grammatical masterpiece, expressing in terse and forceful sutras, not only the principles and rules of grammar of the Tamil language and poetics but also the literary grammar, developed with minute microscopic detail, of Porul or the subjects that may be treated in Tamil Literature, with focus on the way in which they should be treated and the literary technique and metrical patterns that should regulate the works of poets. Thus it is not only a grammatical masterpiece but also a Sociographical and Sociological Encyclopedia of Tamil Grammar, Tamil Language, Tamil Literature, Tamil Society, Tamil Culture and Tamil Ethos of its time. Though most of the rules of Tholkappiyam grammar, especially those relating to Aham and Puram, may appear to be obsolete now and though they may not seem to govern creative writing of the present age, yet it has to be noted that a knowledge of Tholkappiyam grammar is absolutely essential for a proper understanding and enjoyment of the great works and poems of

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ancient Tamil literature. Hence the great historic importance of Tholkappiyam.

Tholkappiyam has had the benefit of elaborate and exhaustive gloss at the hands of learned and able commentators cutting across centuries and all of them have produced learned comments and commentaries. Without the help of these commentators, Tholkappiyam will be a sealed book even to Tamil scholars.

Damodarm Pillai edited Iraiyanar Ahapporul, a minor Tamil Grammar of ancient times, which was made famous only by its brilliant commentary. Though it is attributed by some Scholars to Nakkirar of the Sangam Age, yet it is really the work of an unknown writer of much later times. The other grammatical works which Damodaram Pillai edited were the Virasoliyam of Buddamitrar, a compact and at the same time a complete Tamil Grammar, which had given full recognition to the impact of Sanskrit on Tamil (11th century A.D.) with Perundevanar's commentary and Ilakkana Vilakkam of Vaidyanatha Desikar (17th century A.D.) with his own voluminous commentary.

Among other ancient Tamil Classics which Damodaram Pillai brought into print for the first time and edited were the Kalithogai, poetically the finest of the eight anthologies of the Sangam age known as Ettuthogai (modern critical opinion considers this and Pari-padal to be post-Sangam works) and the Choolamani a magnificent Tamil kavya by Tholambuzhi Devar, a Jain poet in viruttam metre, generally considered a companion work to the Jivaka Chintamani of Tiruthakka Devar, another great Jain poet. Damodaram Pillai wanted to edit the Jivaka Chintamani also but did not pursue it as it had already been taken up by Dr.U.V. Swaminatha Aiyer. One of the Tamil works of recent times Thanikaipuranam of Kachiappa Munivar (18th century A. D.) was also edited by Damodaram Pillai.

To quote the words of A.V. Subramania Aiyer *"For most of the works which Damodaram Pillai edited with great passion for academic precision and exactness, he has written brilliant*

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introductions in a vigorous and often polemical style and argued at length that Tamil is an independent language of great antiquity and rich literary heritage which has to be taken note of by the whole world and more particularly the western world. This bold and correct stand taken by him in the colonial days of British Imperialism has now become an accepted and common place fact. His prefaces constitute literary criticism of no mean order and clearly bring out his modern outlook."

In the 1880s and 1890s, the book publishing trade in Madras Presidency was in its infancy and authors and editors had to depend upon their own financial resources or seek help from patrons for publishing their books. Damodaram Pillai had to undergo great personal sacrifices on account of the huge cost of his publications as they, in spite of their great intrinsic value, were not a selling proposition during that time. He was financially helped by several patrons including Subramania Desikar, the learned head of Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt. It is interesting to learn that the entire cost of printing the Kalithogai was met by Sir A. Seshiah Sastri who was Dewan of Pudukkottah. The cost of printing of Tolkappiyam Sollathikaram with Nachinarkiniyar's commentary was met by the then proprietors of The Hindu G. Subramania Aiyar and M. Viraraghavachariar. Statesmen like Sir T. Madhava Rao and scholars like Poondi Aranganatha Mudaliar also came forward to help Damodaram Pillai and this shows what great value was set upon his work by the enlightened and leading members of the community at that time.

In 1895 Damodarm Pillai was awarded the title of 'Rao Bahadur by the british government ' in recognition of his services to the cause of Tamil learning. Towards the close of the last century, he became the doyen among the Tamil scholars, who held him in great esteem. In his love of his mother-tongue and devotion to the cause of Tamil learning and culture he was second to none. In the editing of ancient Tamil classics Damodaram Pillai was a most outstanding pioneer, whose timeless service to this great and noble cause entitles him to the grateful remembrance of all lovers of Tamil.

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14

A RELIGIOUS LEADER AND A MAN OF LETTERS FROM JAFFNA

Starting from 1820 the Jaffna School of Scholars have made a substantial contribution to the revival and growth of Tamil learning — Tamil language and Tamil literature. It is beyond dispute that amongst them, the greatest and most versatile was Arumuga Navalar who was at once a religious leader and a man of letters.

Arumuga Navalar was born on 15 December, 1822 at Nallur in Jaffna, as the youngest son of a Karkarthar Vellala called *Kandar,* who was a Government Official and a Tamil Scholar. The young boy inherited from his father a taste for Tamil. Navalar had his early education in a Pial School and later learnt Tamil at the feet of traditional Tamil Pundits. He then joined the well-known English Methodist School run at Jaffna by Rev. Peter Percival. Rev. Percival was so much struck by the Tamil Scholarship of *Navalar* that he employed him as his own Munshi and also as a teacher in the same School to teach Tamil to the higher classes and English to the lower standards.

ஸ்ரீலஸ்ரீ ஆறுமுக நாவலர்
ARMUGA NAVALAR (1822-1879)

Rev. Percival solicited and got the active help of Arumuga Navalar for a Tamil translation of the Bible. This work enabled him to have a knowledge

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of Christianity and and its theology which stood him in good stead later in his religious work associated with the promotion and propagation of Saivism in South India and Ceylon. This Bible translation which was principally the work of Navalar was accepted as the best of several such earlier translations by the authorities of the Church at Madras after consulting Mazhavai Mahalinga Aiyar, a great Tamil Scholar of that time, who considered the Tamil prose style of Navalar as flawless, elegant and beautiful.

Arumuga Navalar equipped himself with a deep study of Tamil literature and Saivite religious classics and published leaflets criticising the conversion work of Christian missionaries and extolling the greatness of Saivism and Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. This brought him into conflict with the authorities of his Christian School which forced him to leave this School on the ground that it stood for religious proselytism and not liberal education.

From that time Navalar devoted the rest of his life to the propagation of Saivism and Tamil learning by speeches and writings which made him famous throughout Ceylon and Tamil Nadu. He also established a school for Tamil and Saivism and a printing press at Jaffna and later at Chidambaram and Madras. He became the most fluent Tamil speaker and writer of his generation. His work was admired by Mahavidwan Minakshisundaram Pillai, Vedanayagam Pillai of Mayuram and C. W. Damodaram Pillai, the literary giants of his generation. In fact, the then head of the Thiruvaduthurai Mutt gave the title of 'NAVALAR' to him in recognition of his oratorical gifts. Ponnuswami Sethupathi of Ramnad Samasthanam also extended to him his patronage.

Arumuga Navalar was a staunch and orthodox Saivite with an individuality all his own. He became the spearhead of Saiva revivalism both at Jaffna and in Tamil Nadu and roused the Saivites to realise the pristine glory of their religion, temples and Agamas. He was a thorn on the side of the Christian missionaries of Jaffna. He was such a stickler for tradition that when the disciples of the poet-saint Ramalinga Swami published his poems with the title of 'Thiruarutpa', Arumuga Navalar promptly challenged the

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claim as profane and pretentious and said that only the songs of the four Samayacharyas could be called by that name to denote authentic divine inspiration. This resulted in a bitter controversy and led to legal proceedings from which Navalar came out at last unscathed.

A.V. Subramania Aiyar (1900-1978), a pioneer in the field of Tamil literary criticism, has rightly observed "Though Arumuga Navalar's services as a Saivite religious leader are notable, yet he will be best remembered by his work in the cause of Tamil learning. In an age when Tamil poets and scholars used to write conventional prabandhms and sthalapuranams in hackneyed metres, Arumuga Navalar realised the importance of prose for the development of Tamil literature and himself gave a dynamic lead. There were before his time, some prose works of a kind such as Father Beschi's Vediyar Ozhukkam and Paramarlhaguru and Ramalinga Swami's Manumurai Kanda Vasagam and the classical literary and philosophical commentaries, but Tamil scholars did not realise that there could be good literature in prose as in poetry. Arumuga Navalar was in reality the Father of Modern Tamil Literary Prose and was the greatest prose writer of the 19th century. His two prose renderings of the Periapuranam and the Thiruvilaiyadalpuranam, out of the many books he wrote, are classics. His style was simple but powerful, without pedantry, bombast or archaism, usually found in prose writings of those days. Navalar was not swayed by linguistic purism of the type that is now becoming fashionable. He was a good Sanskrit scholar himself and considered that a knowledge of Sanskrit, as the language of our religion and culture was essential for Tamil scholars." Dr. Avvai Natarajan has hailed Arumuga Navalar as "A Prince among the Masters of Tamil Prose and an authority on 'Agamic' tradition."

Arumuga Navalar was a voluminous writer and except in a few of his early writings, he maintained a uniform level of excellence. His prose was characterised by the qualities of lucidity, clarity and freedom from mere verbiage. He wrote commentaries of religious works such as Koilpurunam and Sivadharmo-tharam and secular books such as Nannool, the famous grammar.

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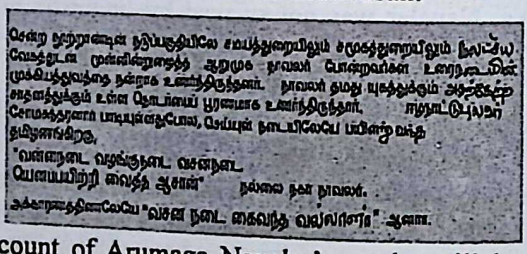
Arumuga Navalar was as great an editor of Tamil classics as he was a prose writer. All his editions are noted for their accuracy of text, minuteness and exactness in the concern for detail and marked by a great thoroughness in method. He edited the largest number of Tamil religious and literary works. Among them are Kandapuranam of Kachiappar, Mahabharatham of Villiputhurar, Tirukkovaiyar of Manickavasagar, Tolkappiyam Ezhuthuthikaram with Senavaraiyar's commentary Ilakkanakothu of Swarainatha Desikar and Choodamani Nighantu of Mandalapurushar. He adopted the use of punctuation marks and split the sandhi in many of his works and he was probably the earliest indigenous scholar who gave a lead in this matter. Navalar's editions gained such a great reputation in the latter half of the 19th Century and the first decade of the 20th Century that they were much sought after by all Tamil students who were then in need of authentic editions of these ancient Tamil works for purposes of research. In Editing, Navalar was later excelled only by Dr U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, who in addition to maintaining the highest standards of accuracy of text and thoroughness of method of Navalar, gave an authentic and authoritative introduction, with complete background information, a summary of the work and copious notes with cross references and an index which enhanced the value of the editions both for scholars and general readers.

To quote the brilliant words of Srinivasan:



No account of Arumaga Navalar's works will be complete without mention of a series of four graded elementary books for children called Balapadam which he wrote. They are encyclopaedic in nature and give short factual accounts of our religious culture and instruction in our hoary Tamil traditions going back to the dawn of history.

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15

THE CREATOR OF MANONMANIAM AND THE TAMIL ANTHEM

The creator of great modern Tamil play **Manonmaniam** and the composer of official Tamil anthem of Neeradum Kadaludutha of today Professor **P. Sundaram Pillai** (1855-1897) was one of the most distinguished men of Tamil letters in the latter half of the 19th century.

Manonmaniam was written by him in 1891. Thereafter he came to be called Manonmaniam Sundaram Pillai.

The prayer song Tamizh Thai Vazhthu was first published by him as the invocation to his play, Manonmaniam. Nearly 80 years later, it was adopted as the official prayer song of Tamilnadu by the State government in June 1970.

His contribution to the cause of Tamil learning, literature and research was made in the midst of an active professorial life. His genius has manifested itself both in critical and creative writing of a high order. P. Sundaram Pillai was born on 5 April, 1855. His father Perumal Pillai was a trader in Alappuzha (Alleppey) in Kerala to which his ancestors had migrated from Tamilnadu. Raja Kesava Dasan (1745-1799) (Valiya Dewanji), the famous Dewanji of Travancore who is known as the 'Maker of modern Alleppey', made Alappuzha a premier port town of Travancore. It was he who constructed the Alappuzha port and brought two Vellala families from Tirunelveli to Travancore in the 1840s for account keeping.

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தமிழ்த்தாய் வாழ்த்து

நீராருங் கடலுடுத்த நிலமடந்தைத் தேிலொழுகும்
சீராரும் வதனமெனத் திகழ்பரதக் கண்டமிதில்
தெக்கணமும் அதிற்சிறந்த திராவிடநல் திருநாடும்
தத்தரிய பிறைநுதலும் தரிசனமுந் திலகமுமே
அத்திலக வாசனைபோல் அனைத்துலகும் இன்பமுற
எத்திசையும் புகழ்மணக்க இருந்தபெருந் தமிழணங்கே!
தமிழணங்கே!

உன் சீரிளமைத் திறம்வியந்து
செயல்மறந்து வாழ்த்துதுமே!
வாழ்த்துதுமே!
வாழ்த்துதுமே!

"மனோன்மணீயம்" பெ. சுந்தரம்பிள்ளை

Invocation to Goddess Tamil

Bharat is like the face beauteous of Earth clad in wavy seas;
Deccan is her brow crescent-like on which the fragrant 'Tilak'
is the blessed Dravidian land.

Like the fragrance of that 'Tilak' plunging the world in joy
supreme reigns Goddess Tamil with renown spread far and wide.

Praise unto You, Goddess Tamil, whose majestic
youthfulness, inspires awe and ecstasy.

"Manonmaniam" P. Sundaram Pillai

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One was Arjunan Pillai of Vadakkekara and the other Perumal Pillai of Thekkekara. Sundaram Pillai was the son of Perumal Pillai and Madathy Ammal. Early in his childhood, his father initiated him into the study of famous Tamil works like Thevaram, Thirukkural and Thiruvachakam of Manikkavachakar.

Sundaram Pillai studied at the Maharaja's College in Thiruvananthapuram from where he graduated in 1876 after a brilliant academic career. He then joined the staff of his own college in 1876 and showed great promise. In 1877, he was appointed as the headmaster of the Anglo-Vernacular School in Tirunelveli which soon became a Second Grade College, known as the M D T Hindu College. He became the first Principal of this college in 1878. In 1879 he went back to the Maharaja's College on the retirement of his master Dr Harvey and succeeded him as professor of Philosophy. He continued to occupy that chair till his death, except for a short period of Government service.

Prof. 'Manonmaniyam' Sundaram Pillai (1855-1897)

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As a professor Sundaram Pillai soon gained reputation for efficiency and brilliance. His profound knowledge of the subject and clear exposition of both Western and Indian philosophy endeared him to students who held him in reverence. He was also a keen student of history and archaeology in which he made original and valuable research which resulted in his lectures on The Early Sovereigns of Travancore. At his instance the Travancore government headed by Dewan Rama Iyengar established a department of Archaeology in which he served in an honorary capacity.

In addition, Sundaram Pillai had a passion for English and Tamil literature and modern science. In reality, he belonged to the now vanished type of versatile scholars of which Poondi Ranganatha Mudaliar, Rangacharya and V. G. Suriyanarayana Sastri (Parithimal Kalaignar) were well known representatives in Madras of that period. While he was in Tirunelveli, Sundaram Pillai came under the influence of Sundara Swamigal of Kodaganallur, a famous saint, mystic and Adwaita scholar of that generation, at whose feet he learnt Vedanta and Hindu philosophy. He regarded him as his guru to the very end of his life and has immortalised him in his play.

Sundaram Pillai's love of Tamil took him into the field of research in the history of Tamils and their ancient literature. In his time, the history of the Tamils, their language and literature, and especially their chronology were still in their infancy. A number of European scholars, most of whom were Christian missionaries had begun to do their pioneering work in this field. Bishop Caldwell's epoch-making book, The Comparative Dravidian Grammar had been published in 1856. In its introduction, he had elaborated certain theories and views about the antiquity of the Tamil language and literature and their special features. Caldwell took the view on the materials then available to him that there could not have been any Tamil literature before the 9th Century AD and that the earliest and greatest of the four Saiva Samayacharyas — Saint Tirugnanasambandar lived about the close of the 13th century. To quote the appropriate words of A. V. Subramania

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Aiyar in this context: 'These and similar views of Dr Burnell and other European scholars provoked Sundaram Pillai into writing his thesis on Some milestones in the history of Tamil literature or The Age of Tirugnanasambanda. In it he has shown with a wealth of knowledge and sound argument that the saint should have lived in the 7th Century AD. This conclusion has since been confirmed by other evidence and finally accepted by modern scholars. This essay and his book on early Travancore kings and other papers constitute research work of a very high order.'

Besides this, Sundaram Pillai translated into English three of the ten poems of Pathupattu, including the longest, Maduraikanchi and Tirumurugarruppadai. Valuable even as his research studies in several fields were, yet Sundaram Pillai's greatest achievement lay in the field of creative writing, both in prose and poetry. His work Manonmaniam which was a poetical drama of over 4,500 lines was published in 1891.

This great work of drama met with a warm public reception. Rich tributes were paid by eminent Tamil scholars of that time. Sundaram Pillai in his preface stated: 'Among the rich and varied forms of poetic composition extant in the Tamil language, the dramatic type, so conspicuous in Sanskrit and English, does not seem to find a place. The play here submitted to the public is a humble attempt to see, whether the defect may not be easily removed.' Sundaram Pillai himself made it clear that Manonmaniam was a literary play which was meant to be read aloud and not staged. It was written in the old Tamil metres, mostly in the Ahaval form which he handled with unusual dexterity, dignity and power.

Though the play Manonmaniam contained many modern ideas about love, patriotism etc, yet it embodied in fine language, the poetic style and the atmosphere of the drama in a truly classical manner. What is interesting to note is that for his theme Sundaram Pillai went to a Victorian English poet and novelist Lord Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873). Sundaram Pillai's classic play

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was based upon Lord Lytton's poem The Secret Way found in his Lost Tales of Miletus. Sundaram Pillai did his literary adaptation in such a clever and subtle fashion that the foreign origin of the story cannot easily be seen.

I can clearly see that Sundaram Pillai when he wrote his classic Manonmaniam was swayed by the philosophy, eloquence and elemental passion for ancient history of Lord Bulwer Lytton. Lytton's work embodied some of the most significant intellectual currents of the 19th Century. Influenced by the approach of Lytton, Sundaram Pillai treated intelligently and interestingly perennial themes of good and evil, of freedom and despotism, egoism and altruism, life affirmation and the power of will. He found fertile material in the dialectic of egoism and idealism.

Sundaram Pillai's exquisite description of the extraordinary loveliness of nature in all its forms in his Manonmaniam was also inspired by the following description of Lord Lytton:

'It was a dark and stormy night (or to give the sentence in its full glory) It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents — except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the housetops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness.'

Through his extraordinary genius Sundaram Pillai created the atmosphere of the ancient Tamil land in his Manonmaniam and made his vital and vibrant characters belong to the native soil. Though the Pandya and Chera royal families are mentioned, the play was not a historical one.

To quote **A. V. Subramania Aiyar** once again: *'Manonmaniam develops a purely romantic story with well knit plots and an array of firmly drawn characters. It has many superb poetical passages and songs, of which the Sivakami Charitham* (again an adaptation of Goldsmith's Hermit) *is the most exquisite in its language, music and import.'*

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Considered from the point of view of its poetry and dramatic art, it is Shakespearean in its general pattern and takes the first place among the few Tamil poetical plays that now exist.

A Tamil treatise on science and philosophy on original lines in prose, called Noorrogai Vilakkam was Sundaram Pillai's next outstanding achievement. In this book he pleaded for a widespread diffusion of Western culture and modern scientific thought and an intelligent understanding of our own religion and philosophy.

The Madras University of British India freely availed itself of his services. The government honoured him with the title of **Rao Bahadur** in recognition of his services to Tamil language, culture and literature. When he was at the height of fame and intellectual power he passed away in April 1897, causing a permanent void in the world of Tamil letters. He will live forever in the legends and annals of Tamil literature. Manonmaniam Sundaranar University will serve as a fitting monument to the creator of Tamil Anthem.

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16

THE GREAT MARAVA PATRON OF TAMIL LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Among the many great scholars and patrons who played a very key role in the revival of ancient Tamil learning and culture towards the end of the 19th Century and in the first decade of the 20th Century was **Pandithurai Thevar** (1867-1911).

Pandithural Thevar (1867-1911)

He founded the **Madurai Tamil Sangam** on 4 September 1901. This Sangam has been hailed as the Fourth Tamil Sangam.

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Pandithurai Thevar conducted the literary and cultural affairs of Madurai Tamil Sangam with great devotion and dedication for 10 years till the time of his untimely death at the young age of 45 on 2 December, 1911.Pandithurai Thevar alias Ukkira Pandya was a scion of the House of the Sethupathis of Ramnad. He was born on 21 March 1867 in Palavanatham, a zamin in the then Ramanathapuram district. He was the youngest son of Ponnuswami Thevar, who was closely related to Bhaskara Sethupathy of Ramanathapuram. Ponnuswami Thevar's younger brother became the ruler of Ramanathapuram under the name of Muthuramalinga Sethupathi, by virtue of his adoption by their aunt, the Rani of Ramanad who had no children. Pandithurai Thevar studied under Muthuswami Iyengar (father of the late Pandit M Raghava Iyengar) and Ramaswami Pillai of Madurai, two of the greatest Tamil savants of the 19th Century and himself became an accomplished Tamil scholar. Pandithurai Thevar became the zamindar of Palavanatham in 1884. Quite unlike most zamindars of his time, Pandithurai Thevar displayed extraordinary energy and enthusiasm for the promotion of Tamil language, literature and culture. He was also a great patron of Saivite learning. The Swadeshi Movement in undivided Bengal in 1905 had a tremendous political and cultural impact in Ramanathapuram district. Pandithurai Thevar became a staunch nationalist and gave a big helping hand to V. O. Chidambaram Pillai when he started his revolutionary Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in 1906.

Pandithurai Thevar continued the glorious tradition of the Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram by his continued and uninterrupted liberal patronage to distinguished Tamil scholars and poets like Mahavidwan Meenakshisundaram Pillai, Arumuga Navalar, R. Raghava Iyengar, M. Raghava Iyengar and many others. Pandithurai Thevar's greatest service to the cause of Tamil was his founding of the Madurai Tamil Sangam in Madurai in September 1901. In that year a political conference was held at Madurai in which Pandithurai Thevar took an active part. At the end of that conference, a historic decision was taken to establish the Madurai Tamil Sangam under the inspiring leadership of

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Pandithurai Thevar. Pandithurai Thevar gave an eloquent address and emphasised the public importance of starting a Tamil Sangam in order to revive the tradition of the ancient Tamil Sangam patronised by the Pandian kings of Madurai 2000 years ago. He did not lose a moment in carrying out his laudable aim with the co-operation of the most learned men of that time. Pandithurai Thevar placed his own building at the disposal of the Madurai Tamil Sangam. Along with the Tamil Sangam, a Tamil college named after the Sethupathis was also established by him. In addition the Pandian Library, a printing press for publishing Tamil classics and a classical Tamil monthly magazine called Sentamizh, were also started as a part and parcel of the larger programme of promotion of classical Tamil learning undertaken by the Madurai Tamil Sangam. Very unfortunately Pandithurai Thevar's untimely death in 1911 was indeed a death blow to the cause of promotion of Tamil language and literature.

As long as he lived, Padithurai Thevar was the life and soul of the Madurai Tamil Sangam. He was its first president and served in that capacity for 10 years from 1901 to 1911. In order to set the activities of the Madurai Tamil Sangam, he took particular care to secure the services of such stalwarts as the famous Ramanad trio, Pandits R. Raghava Iyengar, M. Raghava Iyengar and Tirunarayana Iyengar, who were placed in charge of the newly started Tamil College and the Tamil magazine ***Senthamizh.***

He was also successful in obtaining the services of the celebrated Seithur brothers Subramania Kavirayar and Kandaswami Kavirayar and Arasan Shanmuganar of Sholavandan, all noted for their outstanding scholarship and deep erudition. Besides, scholars from outside such as Dr U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar and V. G. Suriyanarayana Sastri (Parithimal Kalaignar) and several others took part in the work of the Tamil Sangam. There is no doubt that during the first quarter of the 20th century, Madurai Tamil Sangam had a very notable record of work to its credit in the field of promotion of Tamil learning and research, a record that has not been beaten by any other organisation till date.

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Even before he founded the Tamil Sangam in Madurai, Pandithurai Thevar had made a name for himself in the Tamil world through his poems, writings and speeches. He was celebrated as a powerful speaker. He had published two anthologies in Tamil—one literary and the other religious. He helped his teacher Ramaswami Pillai to bring out an excellent edition of the Thevaram hymns and gave liberal monetary help to many scholars for publishing their works. He presided over many Tamil and Saivite conferences and roused among all Tamilians a great passion for the realisation of the glory of their literary and religious heritage. He was a lover of Carnatic music and extended his patronage to Poochi Iyengar who became the famous Samasthana Vidwan of Ramnathapuram and several other eminent musicians of his day.

Pandithurai Thevar was probably the last of that band of zamindars and noblemen, who ever since the establishment of the Poligar system of rule in the southern districts four centuries ago by Viswanatha Naick of Madurai, nobly served the cause of Tamil learning and culture, both by their personal accomplishments and munificent patronage of Tamil poets and scholars.

The Madurai Thamil Sangam established by Pandithurai Thevar with the assistance of his cousin Bhaskara Sethupathy, the Raja of Ramnad at that time and its jcurnal Senthamizh played an important role in creating a new Tamil Renaissance among the Tamils of South India and Sri Lanka in the first two decades of the 20th century. Its historic importance lies in the fact that it created a class of outstanding Tamil pundits through a well organised and prestigious system of examinations at a time when strong objections were being raised against creating a Chair for Tamil, in the University of Madras.

The fully qualified pundits created by the Madurai Tamil Sangam in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka were instrumental in shaping the political vocabulary of Tamil identity when Tamil nationalism began to assert itself as a political force on both sides of the Palk Straits after 1930. Pandithurai Thevar viewed the Madurai Tamil Sangam not only as a literary or cultural academy but as a

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nationalist organisation. This approach was clearly defined by him when he declared: 'The love for one's language is not only the basis of patriotism but also of the love for one's religion.'

When the Madurai Tamil Sangam was established in 1901, Pandithurai Thevar appointed R. Raghava Iyengar as the *'Editor of Senthamizh.* He was the court pandit of the Sethupatis of Ramanathapuram. His nephew M. Raghava Iyengar succeeded him as editor of the same journal in 1904 and served for 8 years.

The Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram were great patrons of Tamil literature. One of the greatest of them all was Bhaskara Sethupathi. It was he who patronised Swami Vivekananda. It was he who gave his full support to Pandithurai Thevar when he established Madurai Tamil Sangam. When Bhaskara Sethupathi died, Raghava Iyengar paid his tribute to his great benefactor through his moving elegy in Tamil beginning with the following lines:

செங்கையால் வாரி அளித்தாயே சேதுபதி
எங்கய்யா எங்கட்கு இனிமேல் இடம்?

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17

J.M. NALLASWAMI PILLAI - A TRAILBLAZER IN SAIVA SIDDHANTA

In the last quarter of the 19th century, two great Tamil Scholars and Savants created a Saivat Revolution in Madras Presidency by reviving and resurrecting Saiva Siddhanta System and Philosophy. One of them was Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879) from Jaffna in Sri Lanka. The other scholar was J.M. Nallaswami Pillai (1864-1920).

J M Nallaswami Pillai
(1864-1920)

J.M. Nallaswami Pillai was a contemporary of Veda nayagam Pillai (1826-1889) and Dr U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (1855-1941). He was a multi-faceted genius and his wide ranging literary activities as a powerful writer, translator and propagandist of Saiva Siddhanta were mainly responsible for re-kindling the revival of academic interest in Saiva Siddhanta in Europe and America in the first decade of 20th century. He was acknowledged by all his contemporaries as an outstanding authority on the philosophical works known

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as Saiva Siddhanta Sastras. By his translations of nine of the fourteen books coming under this category and by his authoritative commentaries and essays on the Saiva Siddhanta he become, probably, the most voluminous writer on that philosophical system in the English language.

Nallaswami Pillai was born in a respectable Vellala Family at Trichirappalli on 24 November, 1864. He came from a very influential family, many of whose ancestors had held high official positions under the Carnatic Nawabs. His father was Manickam Pillai who was employed as a Clark in the District Police Office at Tiruchirappalli. He studied at SPG High School in Tiruchirappalli, passing the Matriculation Examination with Distinction in 1879. He then went to SPG College, Tiruchirappali for his Intermediate College Education. His College Principal Mr. C.W. Pearco, an Englishman, was the first recognize the genius of Nallaswami Pillai and described him as 'a radical student'. He passed his Intermediate Examination in First Class obtaining the First Rank in 1881. Soon thereafter he joined the Presidency College, Madras in 1881 and passed his B.A. with distinction in 1884. What is significant is that he took up Logic and Philosophy as his special subjects in his BA Class and this academic training turned out to be a great asset in his activities as a Philosopher and Religious Savant in his later years. Two distinguished Professors of Presidency College Dr D. Duncan and Mr. Bilderbeck rated Nallaswami Pillai as *'An outstanding Scholar with an incisive mind with concern for minuteness and exactness'*.

In 1884, he was married to Lakshmi Ammal who was the daughter of one of his relations called Parasurama Pillai of Tiruchirappali. He led the ideal life of a Grihasta.

After qualifying for Law from the Madras Law College, he enrolled himself as a High Court 'Vakil' in 1887 and worked as a junior under Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, at Madurai. Sir S. Subramania Aiyar was a leader of the Madurai Bar then. Apart from devoting himself to his legal work and public affairs, Nallaswami Pillai

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started concentrating on the study and discussion of Religious and Philosophical Subject, particularly Saiva Siddhanta.

Nallaswami Pillai was elected as Member of the Madurai Municipal Council. His brilliance as a Lawyer was noticed by Mr. Ross, I.C.S. who was then the District and Sessions Judge at Madurai. On his recommendation, Nallaswami was recruited to the Judiciary in 1893 as District Munsif, in which capacity he served for 20 years in various places. Though he became a District Munsif early in his life, he was not one of those routine beings who get lost in a job without regard for the finer instincts of a nobler and detached life. He early in his life he had developed a proper perspective on all aspects of leading a meaningful life with a balanced sense of proportion.

Nallaswami Pillai resigned from his Judicial post and reverted to the Bar in Madurai in 1912. He continued his practice as a lawyer at Madurai till his death in 1920 at the comparatively early age of 56.

Nallaswami Pillai is best remembered as a Tamil Savant, whose writings on the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy have an enduring value. He came early under the influence of the writings of Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna and Somasundara Nayagar of Madras, two of the most powerful champions of Saiva revivalism of the last century. In 1895 Nallaswami Pillai published his English translation and exposition of Sivagnana Bodham of Meikanda Devar, a short work of twelve sutras, with explanatory prose and some illustrative stanzas. The Sivaghana Bodham is considered to be the most authentic Saiva Siddhanta scripture for which a most brilliant and authoritative commentary was written by Sivagnana Swamigal in the 18th century. It is known as the 'Mapadiyam' (Tamil form of Mahabhashyam). Nallaswami Pillai's translation and exposition are based on this commentary. In the sixties of the 19th century an English translation of this work was published by Rev. Hoisington but it did not attract as much notice as that of Nallaswami Pillai's which was better in every respect.

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1.	English Translation of Sivagnana Bodham	.....	1895
2.	*Light of Truth or Siddhanta Deepika* (An English Monthly) — First Series Vols. I to VI	.....	1897
3.	[illegible] Vol. I	.....	1897
4.	English Translation of Sivagnana Siddhiar	.....	1897
5.	Cameos from Tamil Literature	.....	1897
6	English Translation of Tirumular's Tirumantiram	.....	1897
7.	English Translation of Unmai Vilakkam	.....	1902
8.	*Siddhanta Deepika and Agamic Review* Second Series Vols. II to XIV	.....	906-1914
9.	English Translation of Sri Kanta Bashyam	.....	1906
10.	English Translation of Siddhanta Gnana Ratnavali	.....	1907
11.	English Translation of Dravida Maha Bashyam	.....	1907
12.	Studies in Saiva Siddhanta (A Collection of Essays in English)	.....	1911
13.	Sekkizhar's Life of Saiva Saints in English	.....	1912
14.	English Translation of Irupa-Irupahdu	.....	1912
15.	English Translation of Vina Venba	.....	1913
16	English Translation of Kodi Kavi	.....	1914

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF J.M.NALLASWAMI PILLAI'S WRITINGS

Nallaswami Pillai's English translation of Sivagnana Bodam in 1895, attracted worldwide attention in the West. In this book he wrote: *'Sivagnana Bodham is a unique book of unrivalled compression of words and ideas alike.*

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THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

— OR —

SIDDHANTA DEEPIKA.

A Monthly Journal Devoted to Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Science, &c.

Commenced on the Queen's Commemoration Day, 1897.

VOL. I. } MONDAY, THE 21st JUNE 1897. { No. I.

Facsimile of the Outer Cover of The Light of Truth or Siddhanta Deepika, Founded on 21st June 1897

Its terseness of diction and brevity of expression will baffle the powers of exposition and beggar the attempts at translation by even the biggest of Tamil Pundits.'

In June 1897, in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of the accession of the Queen Empress Victoria to the British throne, Nallaswami Pillai started a monthly journal called the SIDDHANTA DIPIKA OR THE LIGHT OF TRUTH at Madras. Writing in the first issue on 'OUR AIMS' he said: 'We have considered it a shame that we should be coached in our Vedas and Vedanta by German Professors on the banks of the Rhine in Europe and that an American from a far off country should be the first translator of the foremost work in Tami Philosophy and that an old Oxford Professor like Dr G. U. Pope should sit poring over the Tamil 'WORD' and render into English verse. Far from condemning such noble examples which redound greatly to the glory of the European, I would say 'Noble examples these! May we follow! Our journal will devote itself to bring out translations of rare works in Sanskrit and Tamil, Literary, Philosophical and Religious, will devote its pages to a more critical and historical study of Indian Religious Systems, to develop a taste for and to

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induce a proper and more appreciative cultivation of our Indian Classical and Vernacular Languages and Literature. Greater attention will be paid to the language and history of South India and the Dravidian Philosophy and Religion will find their best exposition in its pages and in this respect it is intended to supply a real and absolutely felt public want.'

Nallaswami Pillai also published English translations of **Tirumular's** great poem **Tirumantiram** and nine of the Siddhanta works in his monthly magazine Siddhanta Dipika. They were all published under his perosnal guidance for 14 years from 1897 to 1911 for popularising Tamil Classics and Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy among the English knowing public. He wrote many essays on the various aspects of this system, which were later, collected and published as a book under the title **'Studies in the Saiva Siddhanta'**, which shows his power as a lucid thinker and forceful and dignified controversialist.

His magnum opus, however, was his English translation of the Sivagnana Siddhiyar with a commentary, which, though based on earlier works was singularly profound. This appeared in a serial form for several years in the **Siddhanta Dipika** and was later published in a book form in 1913 with a learned introduction. The author of Sivagnana Sidhiyar was Arulnandi Sivacharya who was a most learned Vedic and Agamic Brahmin Scholar of his age. He became a disciple of the young Vellala saint Meikanda Devar, considering him to be an illumined soul and set an example of totally ignoring caste in the religious and spiritual field, which was followed by the equally great Umapathy Sivacharya. There had been an earlier translation of the **Sivagnana Siddhiyar** by Dr. Graul, a German scholar but it was only a pioneer attempt, which was replaced by Nallaswami Pillai's more accurate and brilliant translation.

Nallaswami Pillai wrote with great passion and conviction which should give a cultural shock to all the anti-Sanskrit and anti-Hindu Dravidian racist scholars of today: 'As I have already pointed out, the Tamil literature being saturated with the Saiva

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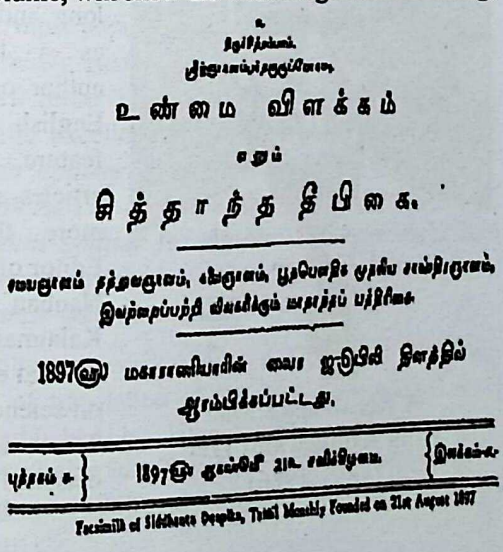
Siddhanta philosophy the few European scholars like Rev Dr. G. U. Pope and others who laboured hard in this field have been led to think that this philosophy is the choicest (pure) product of the Dravidians (Tamils) and it had no relation to the ancient Sanskrit philosophy and their opinions seem to be guiding subsequent writers like Rev. Mr.Goudie, Prof. Frazer and others.... I should like to correct the notion first that there is anything peculiarly Tamilian in Saiva religion and philosophy; but on the other hand almost all the terms and forms we use are derived from Sanskrit; and the bulk of the literature in Tamil dwindles into insignificance when compared with the vast Agamanta literature in Sanskrit.' He courageously stood for this position to the very and of his life.

In the Convention of Religions held at Calcutta in 1907 and at Allahabad in 1911, it was Nallaswami Pillai who was the spokesman for Saivism and the Siddhanta philosophy and delivered stirring addresses.

The value of his works was recognised and their entire copyright was acquired by the Dharmapuram Mutt, which has published a few of his works. A collection of all his English writings including his translations of the religious books, if brought out in a single well-edited volume, will show the wide range of his learning, the strength of his intellect and the tireless and devoted work, which he did for popularising the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and establish his lasting fame as the most well read and level headed Saiva Siddhanta scholar of his age.


உண்மை விளக்கம்
எனும்
சித்தாந்த தீபிகை.
1897ஆம் மகாராணியாரின் வைர ஜூபிலி தினத்தில்
ஆரம்பிக்கப்பட்டது.
Facsimile of Siddhanta Deepika, Tamil Monthly Founded on 21st August 1897

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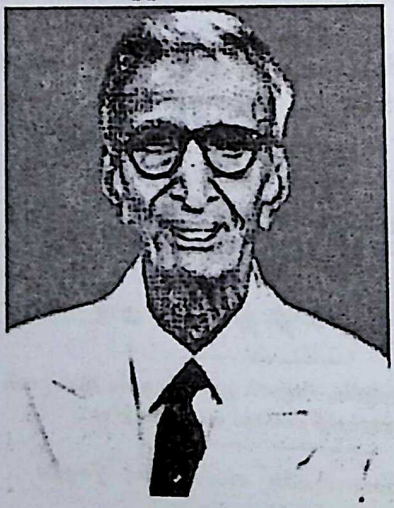
18

AN APOSTLE OF TAMIL SCIENTIFIC WRITINGS

In 1917, a young Lawyer called P. N. Appuswami Iyer, then living in Mylapore, Madras (Now Chennai) translated Einstein's Theory of Relativity into Tamil.

If Einstein can be known as one who revolutionized the world of Modern Physics, **P. N. Appuswami Iyer** (who came to be popularly known in the world of Tamil and English letters as 'Pena-Appuswami') can legitimately be described as a great pioneer and as an apostle in the world of science and scientific writing in Tamil. He had a long and distinguished career as a lawyer, educationist, author of over 100 books in English and Tamil, writer of feature articles and special articles and scripts numbering more than four thousand, Editor of two magazines Tamil Nanban (over 10 years) and Kalaimagal (over 10 years), general editor of several books on science both in English and Tamil, a translator of several classical works in the field of



A Renaissance Man
Pena Appuswami Iyer
(1891-1986)

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science and literature and more particularly the Sangam Classics, a brilliant broadcaster and above all a great teacher of Tamil, English and Sanskrit literature. He was a true Mahamahopadhyaya in every sense of the word. 'Pe Naa Appuswami' was born on 31st December 1891 as the elder son of A. Y. Narayana Iyer of Perungulam Village near Srivaikundam in Tirunelveli District. His mother was Laxmi Ammal from Pathamadi Village in the same district. His paternal uncle was Shri Madhaviah who was one of the early pioneers in the field of Tamil fiction and novels. He was the author of one of the early novels famously known as 'Padmavati Charitram'. 'Pe Naa Appuswami' had his schooling in Central Hindu School in Tirunelveli. After completing his Intermediate Course in Hindu College, Tirunelveli, he moved to Presidency College in Madras in 1908. He took his bachelor's degree (with Chemistry, English and Sanskrit) in 1911. In 1913, he took his bachelor's degree in law from Law College, Madras.

'Pe Naa Appuswami' produced several text books in Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Zoology from the High School level to the college level (B.A /B Sc). He authored several popular books in Science (both in Tamil and English) for the children and the common masses. Most of them were published by Higginbotham's, Madras. Some of the most popular titles from 1925 to 1955 were *The Wonders of Electricity, Radio and Broadcasting, X-Rays, The story of the Atom.* All these titles were awarded first prizes for academic and scientific excellence by the Madras University of British India. ***'Pe Naa Appuswami' won the UNESCO prize for his book 'Let Us Look At The Sky'. He also produced a book in Tamil titled 'Payanathin Kadhai' for the Neo-Literates*** under the Adult Education Programme which won the Central Government Award for effective mass communication.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the USIS in Madras sponsored the works of translation of 'Pe Naa Appuswami' and these books were published by Higginbothams, Madras. The following works of translation into Tamil by **'Pe Naa Appuswami'** were very popular between 1960 and 1970.

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I. SCIENCE BOOKS:

a) Science and Common sense J. B. Conant

b) Our Nuclear Future Teller and Latter

c) The Time Machine- H.G. Wells

II. NON-SCIENCE BOOKS

a) The History of Bengali Literature Dr. Sukumar Sen.

b) The Literature of the United States-Marcus Cunliffe.

c) The Lyndon Johnson Story Booth Mooney.

d) Crusaders for Freedom Henry Steel, Commager.

e) The Constitution of India

(As a Jurist Member of the five Man Committee)

As an Eminent Educationist, he served the Madras University as a Member of the Board of Studies in Tamil from 1934 to 1952. He served the All India Radio as Education Advisor (With particular reference to Broadcasts meant for Elementary and Middle School Levels) for nearly 9 years. He served in distinction at the Southern Language Trust as Director of the Translation Training Course which was run for many years in collaboration with the Government of India. He was a frequent contributor to The Hindu, The Mail, Indian Express, PEN Bombay and Vishwa Bharathi on History, Literature, Art and Science. Between 1935 and 1955, 'Pe Naa Appuswami' wrote more than 500 articles in Tamil relating to all fields of knowledge and modern science. In order to furnish illustrations and sketch drawings for his articles in Kalaimagal magazine and Dinamani Newspaper, he had requisitioned the services of whole time painter and artist for the purpose on a monthly salary of Rs.150/-. In collaboration with A. G. Venkatachari, 'Pe Naa Appuswami' created two forums for the promotion of science called 'Vignana Peravai' and 'Vignana Medai. Through these organizations, 'Pe Naa Appuswami' used to deliver popular public lectures in Tamil under the titles like 'For the Husband, For the Poor Farmer, For the New Trader, For

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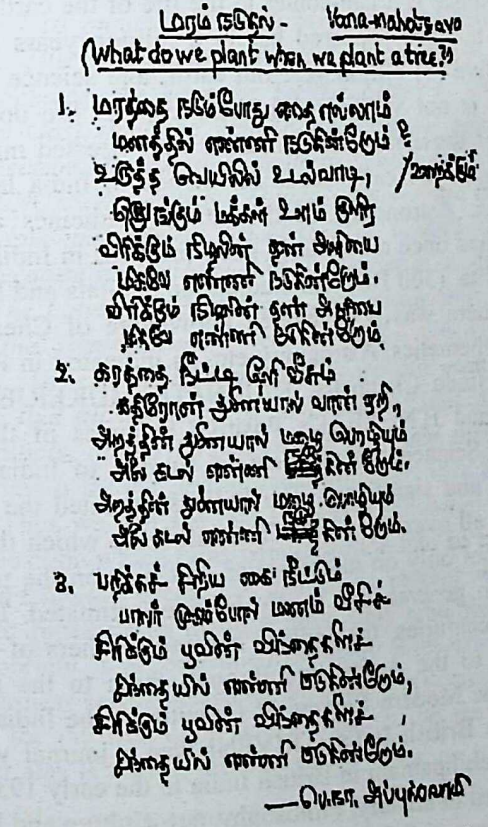
Primary School Teachers, For the College Professors, For the Students and For Those in Public Administration'.

He declared his mission of promotion of science through popular education in Tamil in these words: *'I want to impart the message of Science and Scientific spirit to the people of Tamil Nadu in their own mother tongue. This is my life's passion and mission. In order to pursue and achieve this objective, I want to impart lessons in elementary science following the traditional pedagogic method of serving bitter pills of scientific knowledge suitably dressed as sugar-coated pills.'*



(This is the fascimile of Pena Appusamy's own handwriting tamil)

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He was a wonderful writer of splendid Children's Verse. He was a lover of nature in all its forms. The birds and flowers remained his first delights till the end of his days. Through his children's verse, 'Pe Naa Appuswami' demonstrated to the world of Tamil Letters that the real voyage of discovery lies, not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. I have given above a sample of his verse which he composed for children on the occasion of 'Vana-Mahotsava Day' in 1959. Pe Naa Appuswami was a powerful writer, both in English and Tamil. In the 1970s, he wrote a brilliant essay under the title 'Some Indian Scientists 'Their Genius and Achievements'. In his introduction he wrote as follows: 'Science is a late-comer in the life of the earth. Primitive man seems to have appeared barely a million years ago on the four (4) to five (5) billion year old earth; and science as we now conceive it, is not yet four (4) centuries old. We do not know the names of those most ancient men who wrested many secrets from Nature.... The early seeds of science in India lay dormant for centuries. Astronomy, Mathematics, Medicines and Allied Disciplines had once made fairly good progress in India. Susrutha in his 'Samhita' (300 BC) had studied the habitats and locomotion of fishes. There was a developed knowledge of Chemistry and Physics, Mathematics, Astronomy etc. as indicated in P.C. RAY's History of Hindu Chemistry, KALINATH MUKERJEE's Hindu Astronomy and B.N. SEAL's Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus... In Science too the debt of Europe to India has been considerable and significant. The Indians invented the numerical figures used all over the world. The influence which the decimal system had not only on mathematics, but also on the progress of civilization in general, can hardly be over-estimated. During the 8th and 9th centuries, the Indians became teachers of arithmetic and Algebra to the Arabs, and through them to the nations of West. Like the Modern Review of Calcutta or the Indian Review of Madras in British India, TRIVENI was a journal which was started in Machilipatnam in British India in the early 1930s. It was wholly devoted to History, Philosophy, Art, Culture and Literature. Pe Naa Appuswami was a regular contributor to this journal.

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When the Golden Jubilee of this classical journal was celebrated in 1981, Pe Naa Appuswami contributed a brilliant article under the title 'Here is another confluence'. In the introductory paragraph he brilliantly outlined the innumerable dimensions and contours of TRIVENI: *'From very early times and among various peoples of the world, the number 'THREE' (3) has been regarded as memorable and mystic, and has gripped the imagination with something akin to awe and wonder. The 'TRINITIES' of the Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths; the divisions of TIME Past, Present and Future—; the dimensions of SPACE 'Length, Breadth and Thickness (Height or Depth)' Earth, Sky and Heaven; Sun, Moon and Stars; Thought, Word and Deed; Prose, Poetry and Drama; and so on and on, have been conceived and regarded as THREE. This idea has permeated Religion and Faith, Politics and even Science. We have the THREE States of Matter (Solid, Liquid and Gas); and the THREE fundamental particles of the ATOM (Electron, Proton and Neutron). There are several other CONFLUENCES of THREE - Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati; of Love, Wisdom and Power. The 'TRIVENI' is declaredly devoted to Art, Literature and History and its symbol is a combination of THREE- The Lotus, The Flame and The Thunderbolt. The ancient Kings of the Tamil Country were THREE - Chera, Chola and Pandiya..... We can and should feel if we are men and women of culture, that all the world is skin, and we should behave and act accordingly. May TRIVENI, which has been endeavouring to promote such a feeling and attitude, flourish? May TRIVENI live for ever!* Thus we can see that Pe Naa Appuswami had the rare gift of exposition which turns popularization into an art. The touch is light and always lucid; the manner is elegant without being artificial or finicky. The mood is alternately rebellious and sober, but the sobriety is accompanied by many reservations and even the recklessness seems measured. Pe Naa Appuswami, continually spoke up for the free mind which ought to be the glory of the world (but alas is not) in the 21st century.

Pe Naa Appuswami served as the editor of two Tamil journals `Tamilar Nesan' and `Kalaimagal' with great

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distinction. When the silver jubilee of `Kalaimagal' was celebrated in 1957, Pe Naa in a landmark article titled 'Kalamagal Piranda Kathai' recalled the interesting story relating to the launching of the journal on 15 January 1932.

This journal was founded by Narayanaswami Aiyer who was the son- in- law of Sir V. Krishnaswami Aiyer and who was also editor of Madras Law Journal.

Narayanaswami Aiyer visited Pe Naa at his residence in Chitrakulam at Mylapore in Chennai in October-November 1931 and sought his advice on the starting of the journal.

It was on the specific recommendation of Pe Naa that Narayanaswami came forward to launch the first issue of Kalaimagal in January 1932. Its front outer cover of the first issue was draped in golden colour and it carried a beautiful colour painting by painter Ram Mohan Shastri. On the day of inauguration, vidhwan R. Raghava Aiyengar offered his felicitations. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr U. V. Swaminatha Aiyer wrote a brilliant essay on the fine arts of Tamilnadu in the first issue.

Pe Naa, Anavardha Vinayagam Pillai, S Viyapuri Pillai, K. A. Neelakanda Shastri, K. V. Krishnawamy Aiyer, Sivarama Setu Pillai, M. Lakshmi Ammal, M. Raghava Iyengar and T. S. Ramachandra Aiyer were appointed as honorary editors on the editorial board of Kalaimagal The board was responsible for converting the journal into a powerful instrument of thought and culture in the next two generations.

Pe Naa's house at Mylapore became the focal meeting point for weekly literary meetings from 1925 to 1945. Every Saturday, in the afternoon at 4 pm, Pe Naa used to hold his literary court. Scholars and savants like T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliyar, S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Professor K. Swaminathan, S. S. Vasan, M. Arunachalam, M. Raghava Aiyengar, K. Neelakanda Shastri, K. V. Krishnaswamy Aiyer, T. S. Chockalingam, Va Raa, A. N. Sivaraman, V. V. Srinivasa Aiyengar, K. Balasubramania Aiyer,

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K. Seshadri, T. L. Venkatarama Aiyer, Professor V. Saranatha Aiyengar, Naratha Srinivasa Rao, S. G. Srinivasa Achari (Konashtsi), K. Savithri Ammal, P. Sri, and Ve. Pa. Subramania Mudaliar and others used to participate in those weekly literary meetings.

Professor K. Swaminathan used to call this weekly meeting of scholars as the meeting of the 'The Bloomsbury Group of Mylapore.'

In the last few years of his life (when he was over 89 years old) he translated into English some of the Sangam classics like Ainkurunuru, Akananuru, Kalittogai, Kurunthogai, Nattrinai, Paripadal, Pathitrupathu and Pathupattu.

I had the good fortune of assisting him in this translation work which was published by the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Chennai, in 1985. On 12 July 1980, he wrote to me from Chennai, formerly Madras, as follows: *'Many plans are made. Some are wrecked, some miscarry and some succeed. I have no doubt my Sangam Tamil verse in English will succeed.....I want you to give me your help, not with words or smiles, but with careful scrutiny and helpful criticism. I know you have the will and that you have the ability. You are on a big job and have so many other hobbies which draw your talents away. If you think you have the time and the inclination, and will really put your ample and powerful-yet delicate-shoulders to it, I shall send you a copy (type-script) and expect you to help.'*

I was then serving as first chairman of Tuticorin Port. I joyously accepted his great proposal. Working along with Pe Naa on the Sangam classics was an elevating spiritual and intellectual experience. He was a slight, grey-haired man, with prominent forehead and bright and sharp eyes, sharp features except for retreating chin, nervous hands and alert quick movements in manner and dress and in outward bearing he was most carefully trimmed, conventionally correct, dignified and punctiliously

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polite. In speech, he had an almost affectedly clear enunciation of words and preciseness of expression. In morals, he was a puritan; in personal habits, almost an ascetic, except that he always lived for efficiency and therefore, wanted to keep himself in the best physical condition. But intellectually, he was audacious — an iconoclast detesting religious and social conventions, suspecting sentiment, believing only in the 'Order of thought' and the 'Order of things' in logic and science. He was intolerant of blemishes and faults in himself and others.

He loathed lapses from men's standards. He was impatient with any lack of perfection, whether the lack was in his own self or the world.

We can see how Pe Naa promoted ***comparative literature*** through his English translations. Otalantaiyar's poem belonging to the beginning of the Christian era was compared with the poem of ***Sir Walter Scott*** (1771-1832) who lived in the 18th and 19th centuries.

I used to have long sessions of animated discussion with Pe Naa on different facets of Tamil, English and world literature. I can even now recall that during one of those sessions, he spoke to me in measured words about the glory and the grandeur of Sangam literature. Immediately I had noted down his words of power and wisdom: *'Sangam literature is not a mere juggling of words; what matters is what is left unsaid in it or what may be read between the lines. Great Sangam literature is simply eloquent language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. Such works are not just an entertainment or a diversion to amuse our culture, but the one serious and enduring achievement of the Tamil race - the notches on the bank of an irrigation channel which record the height to which the water once rose.'*

Pe Naa often used to tell me that in Sangam classics we have a superb literature of incomparable force and beauty coupled

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with economy of telling expression. He invited my attention to the following brilliant assessment and appreciation of such classics by A. K. Ramanujan: `In their antiquity and in their contemporaneity, there is not much else in any Indian literature equal to these quite and dramatic Tamil poems. In their values and stances, they represent a mature classical poetry.'

Pe Naa often expressed the view that in Sangam literature passion is balanced by courtesy, transparency by ironies and nuances of design, impersonality by vivid detail, and leanness of line by richness of deep implication. For him, Sangam poems were not just the earliest evidence of the Tamil genius. He declared with great aplomb and authority that the Tamils, in all their 2000 years of literary effort, wrote nothing better.

All of us should appreciate the noble gesture of the government of Tamilnadu shown towards the task of nationalising the works of great Tamil scholars and savants by presenting *a sizeable purse to the surviving members or descendant*s from such families. While this can be a good starting point yet very much remain to be done.

The deathless cause of promotion of Tamil language and Tamil literature would be adequately served only when the monumental works of great scholars like Pe Naa get published in a proper manner. Serious works of these great men may never get published by today's publishers who would normally go only by routine commercial considerations. Unless the government of Tamilnadu comes out with a suitable grant-in-aid programme to induce Tamil publishers to undertake publications of classical works, most of the writings done by great thinkers like Pe Naa may never see the light of day. The State government had recently constituted **`A Scientific Knowledge Tamil Committee.'** The first major task of this committee should be to bring out a consolidated volume of the great scientific, technical and literary works of Pe Naa who was a great Apostle of scientific writing in Tamil.

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In one of the last and most exciting intellectual sessions I had with him at his residence at Kasturba Nagar in Chennai in 1986, a few months before his death, Pe Naa. quoted the following words of **Bertrand Russell** (1872-1969): *'In spite of death, man is yet free, during his brief years, to examine, to criticise, to know, and in imagination to create. To him alone, in the world with which he is acquainted, this freedom belongs; and in this lies his superiority to the resistless forces that control his outward life. To take into the inmost shrine of the soul the irresistible forces whose puppets we seem to be - death and change, the irrevocableness of the past, and the powerlessness of man before the blind hurry of the universe from vanity to vanity - to feel these things and know them is to conquer them.'*

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19

DIVINE VEDANTA DESIKA AND DESTRUCTIVE MALIK KAFUR

Recently I came across an Article in **Tattva Darsana Quarterly Journal** (January-March 2008 issue) by M. C. Devi Prasad of Madurai in which he has given a graphic description of how Vedanta Desika's **`Abheetisthvam'** helped the devotees of Lord Ranganatha at Sri Rangam to withstand and survive the onslaught of the Muslim marauders in the days of Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316), the then Emperor of Delhi.

Vedanta Desika (1268-1369 AD)

Vedanta Desika (1268-1369 AD), the renowned Vasihanava Acharya, was witness to the inhuman and barbarous atrocities of the Muslim plunderers who invaded South India under the leadership of Malik Kafur, a favourite Hindu eunuch slave of Alauddin Khilji, who embraced Islam and looted the famous Madurai and Srirangam Temples between 1308 and 1310.

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Malik Kafur, an Indian, became a general in the army of Alauddin Khilji, ruler of the Delhi sultanate from 1296 to 1316. He was originally captured by Alauddin's army after his army conquered the city of Khambhat. The story goes that Alauddin Khilji fell in love with the beauty of Malik Kafur, who was a eunuch and took him to his court in Delhi. In Delhi after forcible conversion to Islam, Malik Kafur was made the head of invading armies to the south. Kafur rose quickly in the army. It was Malik Kafur who invaded South India and went upto to Rameshwaram, destroying several Hindu temples on his way at Srirangam, Madurai, Manamadurai, Paramakudi and other places. The main objective of these Islamic marauders was to intimidate, terrorize and forcibly convert to Islam the peace-loving Hindus of South India. Those were terrible times and South India had entered a Dark Age. During those days of encircling gloom created by growing Islamic terror, Vedanta Desika gave the message of Abhaya (fearlessness) to the Hindus of South India through his inspired verses numbering 29 in his famous Abheetisthvam. In one of the most inspiring verses from this great devotional poem: Vedanta Desika prays to Bhagavan Ranganatha to give to all his devotees the five weapons or dimensions of fearlessness represented by Chakra, Shanga, Gadha, Sword and Bow and Arrow (of Bhagavan Ranganatha) to fight against the forces of atheism and Islam which were engulfing our country in the 14th century.

Vedanta Desika is considered to be the second greatest Sri Vaishnava writer in the history of Vaishnavism. He was a great poet, devotee, philosopher and master-teacher. After the death of Ramanuja in 1137 A.D., Vedanta Desika became one of the greatest Acharyas of Vadakalai Vaishnavism.

According to many scholars, Swami Vedanta Desikan's period in Srirangam was a defining moment in the evolution of 'Vaishnava' philosophy for many reasons. The Islamic forces led by Malik Kafur invaded Srirangam in 1311-12 and stole away the idol of the presiding deity of Bhagavan Ranganatha to Delhi. The people of Srirangam after a prolonged struggle against the Muslims

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returned to Srirangam with the idol of Bhagavan Ranganatha. There was more shock in store, when some years later the second Islamic invasion took place with a stronger military force led by Mallik Kafur. At that perilous moment Swami Vedanta Desikan decided to send the 'Utsava Murthi' of Srirangam with a group led by 'Pillai Lokacharayar' to an unknown destination. Likewise he also protected the Goddess of the Temple. Swami Vedanta Desikan saved the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Srirangam Temple by covering it with a brick wall. When Swami Vedanta Desikan saw that the entire population of Srirangam was perturbed by the Islamic attack and engulfed in fear, he composed his famous the 'Abheethistavam', which was recited in a chorus in a defiant and fearless manner by all the people of Srirangam during that moment of grave crisis. Almost 13000 Sri Vaishnavites were killed in the prolonged battle against the Islamic invaders in Srirangam. Sri Sudharshna Bhattar also sacrificed his life in the struggle, not before requesting Swami Vedanta Desikan to bring up his children, who were very young then.

Desikan was born in 1268 at Thoopul, near Kanchipuram, (according to legend, on the order of Lord Srinivasa and Padmavathi Thayaar, the God and Goddess of the Tirupati temple), as the son of Ananta Suri and Totaramba. He was named 'Venkatanatha' and belonged to the Vishwamithra gothra (lineage). He was educated and trained by a scholarly maternal uncle of his, Kidambi Appullalar (who was a direct disciple of Ramanuja). Appullarlar also initiated Venkatanatha's Upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony) at the age of seven and made him master the Vedas, Divyaprabandam, Puranas and Sastras. By the age of twenty he was a great scholar without par in the history of Vaishnavism. He got married at the age of 21 to Tirumangai (also known as 'Kanakavalli'). The Lord blessed the couple with a son in 1317 A.D., named 'Varadarya'. Vedanta Desikan rose to the status of an 'Acharya' by the age of 27. He was specially proficient in Kavya, Logic and Philosophy, as evidenced by the title of KAVITARKIKA SIMHA (Kesari), which was conferred upon him by his admirers and followers. His irrefutable logic expressed in a thunderous voice ringing

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SRI VEDANTA DESIKA'S WORKS

1. काव्यम् Poetical Works (5)

Yadavabyudayam
Hamsa Sandesam
Paduka Sahasram
Subashita Nivi
Samasya Sahasri (lost)

2. षाटकम् Drama (1)

Sankalpa Suryodayam

3. स्तोत्राणि Devotional Poems (28)

4. वेदान्त ग्रन्थाः
Philosophical Works (13)
Mimamsa Paduka
Seswara Mimamsa
Nyaya Siddanjanam
Nyaya Parisuddhi
Tatva Mukta Kalapam
Adikarana Saravali
Sata Dushani
Niksheparaksha
Pancaratra raksha
Saccaritra raksha
Vadiraya Kandanam
Dramidopanishat Tatparya Ratnavali
Dramidopanishat saram

5. व्याख्यान ग्रन्थाः
Commentaries (10)
Tatva Tika
Chatusloki Bashya
Stotraratna Bashya
Isavasyopanishad Bashya
Tatparya Chandrika (on Gita)
Gitarta Sangraha Raksha
Rahasya Raksha (Gadyatraya Bashya)
Sarvarta Siddi
Adhikarana Darpanam (lost)
Nigama Parimalam (lost)

Haridina Tilakam

6. रहस्यानि Small Treatises on different subjects in मणिप्रवाल style (28)

a) Amrita Ranjani Rahasyas. – (17)
(one of this "Sara Deepam" is lost)

b) Amritasvadini Rahasyas (11) out of this, two Rahasyas- "Tatvasikhamani" & Madura Kavi Hridayam are lost

7. Separate Treatises in मणिप्रवाल style (4)

Paramata Bhangam
Hastigiri Mahatmyam
Paramapada Sopanam
Rahasya Traya Saram

8. अनुष्ठान On Practice (3)

Bagawat Aradana Vidi
Yagnopavita Pratishta

9. Poems in Tamil-(24)

a) Compiled from the Rahasya Book :—
Amritaranjani, Amritasvadini, Adhikara Sangraham, Paramapada Sopanam, Hastigiri Mahatmyam and Paramata Bhangam

b) Separate Compositions of Tamil Poetry :— (18)

Five out of this, Pandupa, Kazhalpa, Ammanaipa, Oosalpa, Yetalpa-are lost.

10. Miscellany – (5)

Bhoogola Nirneyam
Silpartha Saram (lost)
Tirumudi Adaivu (lost)
Scheyavirodham (lost)
Chakara Samarthanam (lost?)

11. In addition, the following works are also attributed to him. Vaisvadeva Karika, Guruparamparasaram, Datipanchakam, Yamakaratnakaram, Dasadeepaka Nighantu, Vedartha Sangraha Vyakhyanam.

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like a clarion bell from the hill top, earned for him the title of **GHANTAVATARA.** Later in life he gained a general mastery of Tamil grammar and Poetics (Dramida). According to tradition, he seems to have been proficient in secular arts and crafts as well like masonary, icon-making etc. He was thus a great polymath _ Sarva Thantra Swanthatra.

Vedanta Desika was a prolific writer. He became the foremost exponent and a unique preceptor of the ancient and yet new philosophy **Sri Ramanuja Desika Darsana.** I have given above a summarised list of the immortal works of Vedanta Desika:

What are the divine qualities and qualifications of a great Guru? They were defined in an exact mathematical and beautiful manner in 22 versus by Vedanta Desika in his NYASA VIMSHATHI. M.C. Devi Prasad has invited my attention to the most exquisite verse from this great work:

According to that sloka, a Guru is a great achiever, rooted in ancient and traditional lore. He is endowed with these qualities of head and heart — steadfast intellect, blemishless/ faultless character, free from arrogance and ostentation and other degenerating qualities, a man of compassion, a man rooted in truth, a man who has controlled and mastered his senses, a man steeped in Brahman and Satvika qualities, an enhancer, ennobler, emancipator, and liberator of mankind and the world.

I found my interview with Sri M.C.Devi Prasad FCA most inspiring and elevating. He told me: `Chanting of slokas of

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Shankara Bhagavadpada and Vedanta Desika will work wonders in combating terrorism in India today. In particular the chanting of the particular sloka in Abheetistavam (mentioned above) with faith and assiduity every day early in the morning in all Vaishanavite and Saivite temple all over India will go a long way in protecting the peace-loving against the never-ending acts of terrorism'.

May Sri Vedanta Desika confer his blessings on us all! Let me conclude with one of his Stotras:

जीवनं जगतां जीयात् किमप्यपगतस्पृहम् ।
स्वतन्त्रं सर्वतन्त्रेषु वेङ्कटेशाह्वयं महः ॥

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20

A GREAT SAINT WHO LINKED SRIVAIKUNTAM WITH KASI

Most of the people living in Tamilnadu today and much less in the rest of India may even be aware of the fact that in the darkest days for Hindus and Hinduism in the 17th century, a unique poet-saint called Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal (1625-1688) from Srivaikuntam in Tirunelveli District founded the Kasi Matam at Varanasi during the rule of Aurangazeb (1658-1707).

Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal (1625-1688). That Kasi Matam became a permanent centre for the propagation of South Indian Saivism and Tamil culture and learning. He made Varanasi his headquarters for the best part of his life. He mastered the Hindustani, Urdu and Persian languages. He delivered lectures on religious and secular themes in Hindustani and Urdu languages. It was the Sixth head of this Kasi Matam at Varanasi, Thillainayaka Swamigal, who came to the South and established the Mutt at Thirupanandal in Thanjavur District in 1720 A.D., which is also known as **Kasi Matam.**

The glorious life of Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal is of absorbing perennial interest. Many fascinating legends have

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gathered around it, as is usual in the case of the lives of great saints and sages. Professor Dr. Murugesan, who has made a thorough study of the life and writings of Kumaragurupara Swamigal, has rightly said: 'Unique is the place that Aadi Kumaragupara Swamigal occupies in the religious, literary and educational history of India'.

Kumaragurupara Swamigal was born in 1625 A.D. at Sri vaikuntam on the northern bank of the Tambaraparani River, 19 miles from Tiruchendur. He belonged to a Saiva Vellala family. His father was Shanmugasikhamani Kavirayar, from whom he inherited his elemental passion for Tamil learning and poetry. His mother was Sivakamasundarai Ammal, from whom he got his piety and flair for religion. Legend has it that Kumaraguruparar was deaf and dumb till his fifth year. His distressed parents took him to the Sri Subramanya Swamy Temple at Tiruchendur where, by the grace of Lord Muruga, the disability disappeared. From that moment, the young boy is said to have attained his divine precocious powers. From that moment he lisped in numbers and the numbers came to him. From that time he became a devotee of Lord Subramanya and came to be known as Kumaraguruparar.

Learning classical Tamil at the feet of his father, Kumaraguruparar attained great proficiency in Tamil poetry by Divine grace. Right from the days of his youth, he scorned worldly ways, took to an abstemious and austere mode of life, left home and wandered in the Tamil country visiting famous places of pilgrimage such as Madurai, Vaitheeswaran Koil, Tiruvarur and Chidambaram, worshipping in the temples there and composing timeless Tamil poems on the presiding deities of those places.

Early in his life, Kumaraguruparar was emotionally and spiritually drawn towards Masilamani Desigar who was the Head of the Dharmapuram Mutt at that time. When he sought the spiritual guidance and benediction of Masilamani Desigar for being initiated into the regular Sanyasa Ashramam, Masilamani Desigar (in accordance with the established traditional practice)

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advised the young spiritual aspirant to visit important pilgrim centres including Varanasi and then to come back to him again. Initially Kumaraguruparar felt a little diffident of his capacity for such an undertaking, which was very arduous in those days. Masilamani Desigar advised him to stay for sometime in Chidambaram and then again to come back to the Dharmapuram Mutt. Kumaraguruparar complied with this direction and some years later took to holy orders as a disciple of Masilamani Desigar in whose honour he composed a poem, Pandaramummanikkovai.

Immediately thereafter Kumaraguruparar decided to comply with the Divine direction of his Guru to visit Varanasi. That was the turning point in his life. It also turned out to be a decisive moment in the history of Saivism, Saiva Siddhanta and Tamil culture. He became a legendary figure in Varanasi. Overwhelmed by the ever growing and radiating spiritual and cultural influence and impact of Kumaraguruparar, Emperor Aurangazeb, the then Mughal ruler of Hindustan, expressed a desire to see him. Kumaragurupara Swamigal agreed to meet him. In this context, legend has it that he prayed to Goddess Saraswathi by composing his immortal Sakalakalavalli Maalai and instantaneously by Her Grace, Kumaragurupara Swamy became proficient in Hindustani. He went to see the Emperor Aurangazeb riding on a lion, symbolic of courage and pride. According to contemporary accounts, Aurangazeb was greatly impressed with Kumaragurupara Swamigal's self-effacing holiness and learning and treated him with great respect, overcoming his initial suspicion and nonchalance. Kumaragurupara Swamigal was successful in persuading Aurangazeb to allot a plot of land to him at Varanasi near the Kedar Ghat. He later built a Mutt there on that piece of land known as Kumaraswamy Matam, (Kasi Matam) which became a centre of Saivaite religious activity. He built a temple also and re-consecrated the Visweswara Lingam of the Kedar Ghat, which had been subjected to frequent vandalism. The historical fact that Aurangazeb treated Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal with great respect should not be taken as solid proof of

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Aurangazeb's concern for Hinduism and the Hindus of India of his time. This only shows the overwhelming and overpowering spiritual power of Kumaragurupara Swamigal and nothing else.

From that time onwards Kumaragurupara Swamy lived in Varanasi till the end of his life in 1688, except for a short visit to the South to pay his respects to his Guru at Dharmapuram Mutt. He organized the Kasi Matam on sound lines and strengthened it. He delivered regular lectures there, both in Tamil and Hindustani on wide and encyclopedic themes --- religious, philosophical and literary. According to inherited tradition, he was very fond of Kamban's Ramayana and used to deliver regular lectures on it. But there is no basis for another legend that Tulsi Das, the famous creator of Ramcharitamanas was influenced by Kumaragurupara Swamigal's lectures on Kamba Ramayana delivered at Kasi Matam in Varanasi. This will be clear from the fact that Tulsi Das was born in 1532 A.D and died in 1623 A.D. He began his Ramacharitamanas in1574 A.D. Kumaraguruparar was born in 1625 A.D.; he went to Varanasi in 1655 A.D. long after the death of Tulsi Das in 1623 A.D.

As Dr. Murugesan puts it "Kumaragurupara Swamigal got the use of his tongue at the age of 5 at Tiruchendur by the grace of Lord Muruga, revered for long as the Presiding Deity of the Tamils. His first utterance was 'Kandar Kalivenpa' an invocation in 244 lines that has come down from generation to generation as a popular recitation among devotees of Lord Muruga in several Tamil-speaking regions of the world."

Shri Kasi Mutt has published the English version of this prayer. The opening lines are given below:

You are, verily, the Knowledge
That is beyond the comprehension
of the Celestial Creator
that dwells on the red Lotus.
Beyond the ken of the Vedas, ancient and divine
Beyond even the luminous principle of Natha
And, indeed, over-reaching even a Knowledge that is pure.

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According to many great scholars, **Kandar Kalivenpa** contains several scientific truths about cosmic energy and its total control over Man's intelligence. This celebrated and popular poem, together with Kandar Alankaram and Kandar Anubhuthi of Arunagirinathar, constitutes in modern Tamil the Parayanathrayam of millions of Subramania Bhakthas who devoutly chant them. They are not merely songs of prayer but also poems of immense moving power and find literary qualities. Kumaraguruparar is also the author of many Prabhandams such as Meenakshi Amman Pillai Tamizh, Muthukumaraswamy Pillai Tamizh, Madurai Kalambagam, and Chidambaram Seyyutkovai etc., which have been held in great esteem by Tamil scholars for more than 300 years.

His **Neethineri Vilakkam**, an ethical poem in 100 stanzas is a classic in that category. According to Dr. Murugesan, out of 102 pithy sayings in this collection, 25 are devoted to ethical values rooted in the traditional concept of education. Nevertheless they sound novel and relevant even in contemporary educational milieu. Without an awareness of such roots no knowledge can grow and no flower of learning blossom. I am quoting below one beautiful verse from **Neethineri Vilakkam** in Tamil along with its English translation by Dr.Murugesan:

கற்றோர்க்குக் கல்வி நலனே கலன் அல்லால்
மற்றோர் அணிகலம் வேண்டாவாம் - முற்ற
முழுமணிப் பூணுக்குப் பூண்வேண்டா - யாரே
அழகுக்கு அழகு செய்வார்?

Jewels adorned with stones precious
Require no ornament.
So do the learned with studies glorious
Need no decoration.
Lo, who would beautify Beauty?

In his greatest work **Sakalakalavalli Maalai, what Kumara-guruparar sought from Goddess Sakalakalavalli (Goddess Saraswathi)** was not only master of languages but also supremacy over nations. In the concluding stanza of this Maalai he sang as follows:

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மண்கண்ட வெண்குடைக் கீழாக மேற்பட்ட
மன்னரும் என்
பண்கண்டளவில் பணியச் செய்வாய் படைப்
போன் முதலாம
விண்கண்ட தெய்வம் பல்கோடி உண்டேனும்
விளம்பில் உன்போல்
கண்கண்ட தெய்வம் உளதோ
சகலகலா வல்லியே.

'Goddess of All learning!
There are myriads of gods and celestial beings like the creator.
But is there one to equal You?
Grant me this boon.
Let all monarchs, who rule over the earth,
Bow unto me the moment I sing.'

The life of Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal has some lessons for us even today. Though he was a staunch Saivite and a passionate lover of Tamil language, which he often extolled, in his great poems, he never hesitated to learn Hindustani and carry on his religious and literary work in North India. As A.V.Subramania Iyer has rightly said: 'His poems show that he never cared for the linguistic purism of an extreme type that is the fashion in some quarters today. He recognized the greatness of the Sanskrit language and the Vedic and other religious literature embedded in it. In fine, Kumaraguruparar was a poet of considerable genius, a philosopher of great acumen and a powerful religious organiser. And in choosing North India as the scene of his labours, he stand unique among the latter day poet-saints of Tamilnadu.'

Thousands of devotees from Srivaikuntam in Tirunelveli District and other parts of Tamilnadu have given a written representation to the Government of Tamilnadu to persuade the

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Government of India to bring out a commemorative postage stamp in memory and honour of Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal. Shri Irullappan, the organiser of Seva Rathna, who hails from Srivaikuntam is the moving spirit behind this movement. He studied in Sri Kumaraguruparar College for Arts and Science at Srivaikuntam. It is understood that the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu has agreed to get this done through the Government of India. All the devotees of Lord Muruga and Aadi Kumaragurupara Swamigal are very confident that the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu would be in a position to get this simple proposal through the Union Minister in-charge of the subject of issue of postage stamps.

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TAMIL POET SAINT WITH CLAIRVOYANT VISION

The glorious era of national cultural renaissance in India was inaugurated in Bengal in the 19th century by great political leaders, social reformers, men of letters, saints and sages like Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, W.C. Banerjee, Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Sri Aurobindo, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra Sen, and other great personalities. Most political and social historians of India seem to be unaware of the fact that long before Mahakavi Bharathi came out with his patriotic and nationalistic songs in Tamil, a great Tamil poet saint called **VANNACHARABAM THANDAPANI SWAMIGAL** (1839-1898) wrote powerful patriotic songs in Tamil, exposing the unbearable torture of cruelties, brutalities, banalities, and corruption of British Rule in India. All his anti-British Rule and anti-English culture songs can be seen in his great polemical and literary work called 'Aangileyar Andathi'. He was an itinerant sage and saint who traversed the entire length and breadth of the Tamil country which was a part of Madras Presidency for nearly 50 years from 1850 to 1898, carrying his message of total devotion to Lord Muruga. As an outstanding poet, he wrote 49722 poems/songs in Tamil, touching several aspects of Hinduism and Tamil religion, Tamil language, Tamil society, Tamil culture, Tamil grammar and Tamil literature. Indeed he was a multi-faceted and versatile genius. Apart from being a Saint and a Poet, he was a fully liberated spirit who followed the footsteps of Adi Sankara, who wrote on all

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aspects of Shanmatham - Sauram (Aditya), Shaaktham (Ambika or Shakthi), Vaishnavam (Vishnu), Gaanaapathiam, Maaheswaram (Shiva) and Kaumaaram (Subramanya). Much before Mahakavi Bharathi, Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal was a staunch and fearless advocate of women's emancipation through education and widow re-marriage.

Vannacharabam
Thandapani Swamigal (1839-1898)

Professor Nellai Na Chockalingam, has written an outstanding biography of Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal in Tamil which has been published by the Sahitya Academy, New Delhi. Professor Chockalingam served as a Tamil Professor in Madurai-Kamarajar University for 25 years with great distinction. Some of his famous prose works in Tamil are **'Bharathidasan Paadalgalil Marabum Pudumaiyum', 'Marabil Pootha Malargal', 'Chonalum Vaai Manakkum'** etc. He has a limpid, lively and vigorous prose style in Tamil.

The biography of Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal authored by Professor Chockalingam is marked by fine sensitivity and sensibility. I cannot help recalling in this context the appropriate words of the great German Poet **Goethe** (1749-1832) *'The whole work has the character of lawfulness, the perfection of harmonious proportion, the summit of beauty, the dignity and the height of passion'.*

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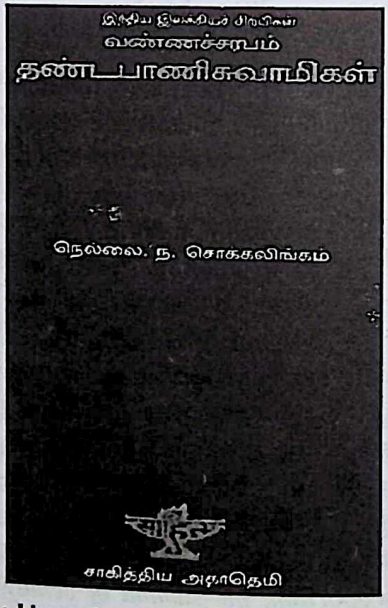
Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal was born as the eldest son in a pious Saiva-Vellala family in Tirunelveli town of Madras Presidency on 29th of November 1839. His father was Sendhinatha Pillai and his mother was Muthammal. They gave the name of Sankaralingam to their eldest son. Sankaralingam started his education at the age of five. He was known to be a highly precocious and extraordinary child. It is stated on good authority that when he was playing with his friends in his eighth year, Sankaralingam had a vision of God Subramanya and by His grace became endowed with the gift of poesy and song. He has stated this clearly in his autobiography called **`Gurubharathatvam'.** From that moment he became a life long Upaasaka (disciple) of Muruga and composed hundreds of songs on Him on the model of the Thirupugazh poems of Saint Arunagirinathar. In the literary circles of his times, Sankaralingam came to be known as `Modern Arunagirinathar', an appellation that Vandalur Ramalinga Swamigal (or Vallalar) is said to have given him on one occasion when they met. Sankaralingam was also given the title of Murugadaasar.



Front page of the biography of Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal

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Murugadaasar wandered from place to place, delivering religious discourses and composing poems. When he was just twenty years old, he visited Madras in 1859 (two years after the Indian Mutiny of 1857) and kept vast audiences at the Kandaswamy Koil in George Town spell bound by his soul-stirring spiritual addresses. Though Murugadaasar was of a deeply spiritual bent given to mystic visions and ascetic habits of life, yet he was persuaded to marry and so he married the daughter of Velayudham Pillai of Pondicherry. Her name was Sundarathammai. She was a devoted wife who was an equally religious person who could write poems and verses in Tamil. After almost three decades of wanderings, Murugadaasar practically settled down at a place called Thiruvamathur near Villupuram in South Arcot District in 1878. He passed away at the age of 59 in 1898. By the time of his death he had become well known as Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal. His popular name was Murugadaasar.

Professor Nellai Na. Chockalingam

As has been mentioned earlier, Murugadaasar was a voluminous writer of poems and songs. His major works on religious themes are the Palani Thiruvaayiram, Thillai Thiruvaayiram, Thiruvaranga Thiruvaayiram, each of which contains a thousand stanzas in different metres and forms of Prabhandams. In most of these poems, the diction is fairly simple and the level of versification is uniform. According to A.V.Subramanya Iyer *'Poetic heights in these Prabhandams are rare though emotionally charged devotional songs are found here and there'*. A solitary Sthalapurana

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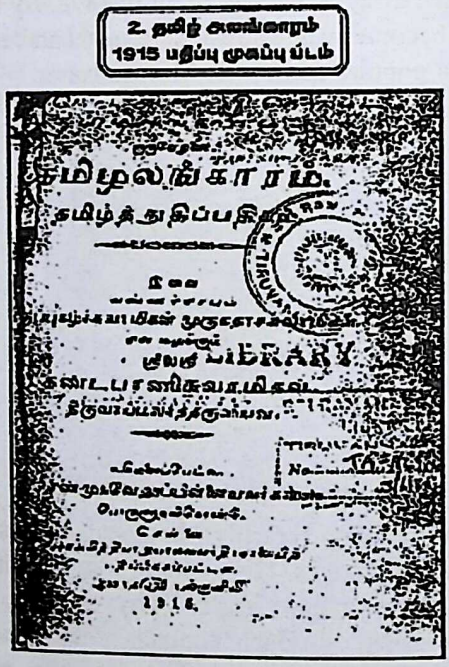
that of Thiruvamathur, stands to his credit. Besides these he has written hundreds of poems on Muruga and other Gods without the least sectarian bias. In the non-religious or secular field, his major works are Pulavar Puranam, Aaruvagai Illakiyam and Manuneri Tirunool. Manuneri Tirunool is an imitation of Thiruvalluvar, in 1300 couplets. Great scholars say that Murugadaasar stopped the 1300 couplets because he felt totally unequal to the task of matching Thiruvalluvar who wrote 1330 couplets. Murugadaasar is also the author of a few minor poems on some aspects of Tamil poetics. This was titled **Tamil Alankaram.** This was published in Chennai (Madras) in 1915.



Cover page of Tamil Alankaram printed in 1915.

Murugadaasar offered a garland of songs on the famous Dhandayudapani of Palani Temple titled Palani Thiruvaayiram. This was published in 1915, 17 years after the death of Murugadaasar.

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Murugadaasar also wrote a fairly long autobiography in verse called Guruthatva Kaaviyam.

Murugadaasar has an abiding place in Tamil literature as the author of Pulavar Puranam and Aaruvagai Illakiyam. Before his time, there were no biographies or life sketches of poets recording systematically the historical, traditional, literary or legendary details known or available about them. The title Pulavar Puranam is apt because most of the details given are more legendary than historical. Seventy individual poets and poetess are dealt with in this work including Kamban, Avvaiyar and Arunagirinathar, the chapters on whom are the longest with 150, 128 and 82 stanzas respectively. All the hymnists of the Saiva Thirumurai and Vaishanava Nalaayira Dhivayaprabhandam have been included and given prominence. There is a chapter giving an account of three Muslim poets including Umaru Pulavar and Savvadhu Pulavar. Two chapters have been given to miscellaneous poets. Many of the poets whose lives have been chronicled are religious personalities, some of whom are not well known. Conspicuous omission is the authors of the Tamil Kaavyas. From a purely literary point of view, the Pulavar Puranam is the author's best work.

According to A.V.Subramanya Iyer, Pulavar Puranam is a very valuable work, which can be compared with the Lives of the Poets of Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). The Pulavar Puranam was first published in 1901 by Dewan Bahadur V.Krishnamachari. Another edition of this work was published in 1908 by Murugadaasar's son Sendhinatha Pillai.

Murugadaasar's Aaruvagai Illakiyam or Six-fold grammar is a notable work and deserves to be better known. To this he added a supplement called Ezhilakkanam or the Seventh grammar in which he has summarised some of the more difficult rules of Tamil grammar and prosody in a rambling manner. According to Tamil tradition, grammar is five-fold viz., Ezhuthu (Letter), Sol (Words), Porul (Treatment of subject and its conventions), Yaapu (Prosody), and Ani (Figures of speech). Departing from

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this tradition, Murugadaasar boldly added a sixth element and called it Pulamai Illakiyam, which can be roughly rendered as the grammar of genius. Under this head, the poet makes several illuminating observations on the poetic art, which show that he too was affected by the modern spirit.

As a wandering monk and mystic saint, Murugadaasar's skill at composing what is known as Sandappaatu i.e. poems in certain metres of varied leaping rhythm, that can be sung to Thalam was wonderful. Though an ardent Saivaite, he was really a great mystic who had crossed the borders of sectarianism and was profoundly Catholic and eclectic in his outlook. He never had any formal training under any great Tamil Poet or scholar. And yet he had attained unsurpassed mastery over the intricacies of Tamil prosody and handled a variety of metrical patterns with ease, charm and grace. This is an inexplicable marvel.

Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal, popularly known as Murugadaasar, was a true Saint and a great devotee of Lord Muruga like Arunagirinathar of Thirupugazh fame.

A true saint is a divine landscape or picture, where all the rare beauties of Lord Muruga are lively portrayed and drawn forth. He has the same spirit, the same judgement, the same will with Lord Muruga. So was it with Murugadaasar. Saints like him are Lord Muruga's jewels, highly esteemed by and dear to Him; indeed they are Royal Diadem in His hand. Throughout is life, his daily message to his disciples was; *Everything you see has its roots in the unseen world.The forms may change,yet the essence remains the same.*

Pass again from the heavenly realm and plunge into the vast ocean of consciousness. Let the drop of water that is you become a hundred mighty seas. But do not think that the drop alone becomes the ocean- the ocean, too, becomes the drop!

Murugadaasar lived in a humble house in Saaliyar Theru in Thirunelveli town, perhaps from 1839 to 1878. When Murugadaasar

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lived in Nellai, he used to do meditation (Thapsya) everyday at **THIRU-URUMAMALAI MURUGAN TEMPLE** (popularly known as Kurukkuthurai Murugan Thirukkovil).

Thiru-urumamalai Murugan Temple at Tirunelveli: It was at this temple that he wrote all his great poems dedicated to Lord Muruga and other Gods. We can see from his autobiographical poem Gurubaratatvam that Lord Muruga of Thiruchendur appeared in his mind's eye on one day and gave him this divine command: 'You produce 16 literary works of Divine Poetry! 12 dedicated to me! One dedicated to Valli! One dedicated to Deivayanai! Two dedicated to Veerabahu! When you are about to complete your eleventh (11th) poetical work, I will send you Thiruneer and Rudraksham from Kandalokam!'

Moved and inspired by the stirring message and benediction of Lord Muruga, Vannacharabam Dandapani Swamigal (Murugadaasar) started singing his great Prabandhams dedicated to Lord Muruga. After completing 10 Prabandhams, he also completed the 11th Prabandham with great hope, devotion and fervour, awaiting the gifts of Thiruneer and Rudraksham from Kandalokam. As the gifts did not arrive even after he had completed the 11th Prabandham as directed by Lord Muruga, Murugadaasar became emotionally upset and unhappy. In a fit of anger, he drowned all the eleven Prabandhams composed by him in the river of Thambarabarani in Thirunelveli. Then he went into a trance and did strenuous Thapsya at THIRU-URUMAMALAI MURUGAN TEMPLE.

Soon thereafter he felt sorry that he had thrown his eleven Prabandhams into the Thambarabarani river. In a flash of sudden enlightenment, he again wanted to recreate the Prabandhams in the manner ordered by Lord Muruga. After completing the sixteen Prabandhams of Venba Anthadhi, Siladai Venba, Thirubandadhi, Yamaka anthadhi, Pathitruppatanthadhi, Sendhinayaka Sathakam, Ula, Navarasamanjari, Agaporulkovai, Dasanga Vaguppa, Kaumara Vijayam, Santhamaligai Thiruppugazh, Kunjari Maalai, Vallinayaki Pillai Tamilzh, Veerabahu Vaalalankaram, and

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Veerabahu Vannapathigam, Murugadaasar performed the public ARANGETRAM of these works at the Thiruchendur Temple in 1863. All the people present on that occasion publicly acclaimed the poetic and literary genius of Murugadaasar. Immediately after the Arangetram was over, one of the well-known priests at the Thiruchendur temple who was hailed as an unmatched Bhakta of Lord Muruga of Thiruchendur, enthusiastically came up to the stage and offered the Divine Thiruneer Prasadam to Murugadaasar.

All the precious literary and poetical manuscripts of Murugadaasar, after his death in 1898, were carefully preserved for more than three decades at THIRU-URUMAMALAI MURUGAN TEMPLE. Later some of them were moved to the Kaumari Madam at Tiruvamathur (near Villupuram) in South Arcot District and Kaumari Madam at Chinnavedampatti in Coimbatore District. Later the rare manuscripts were shifted from Tiruvamathur to Chinnavedapatti. Today all the original hand written manuscripts of Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal are housed and carefully preserved in Kaumari Madam at Chinnavedampatti. In 1866, Murugadaasar went to Thiruvananthapuram. He wanted to meet the then Maharaja of Tranvancore to seek his material help for doing his spiritual and literary work. He sent a written message to the Maharaja seeking an interview through one of the functionaries at the palace and to his dismay, he found that no reply came from the Maharaja. Unshaken, Murugadaasar went to the Padmanabha Temple at Thiruvananthapuram and offered his fervent prayers to the Lord. Then he wrote a Venba reacting to the treatment he had received at the hands of the Maharaja of Travancore.

The meaning of that verse is: 'The beauty and the divinity of Tamil language and Tamil poetry, can never get drowned or buried anywhere, thanks to the spiritual benediction of Vel Muruga. Least of all in lush green Kerala under the temporal rule of an earthly Emperor'. One Ramanandar of Coimbatore District became an ardent devotee of Murugadaasar in the 1860s. Murugadaasar met him at Aavinankudi near Palani. Overwhelmed by the luminosity of Ramanandar's face (I mean Thejas), Murugadaasar admitted him as his first disciple. Murugadaasar directed him to spread the

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message of Kaumaram (worship of Lord Muruga). Accordingly, Ramanandar established the Kaumara Madam at Chinnavedampatti in Coimbatore District. Today it has become an important Madaalayam, fully supported by the Vellala Goundar Community of Coimbatore District. When Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal (Murugadaasar) passed away at Thiruvamathur in July 1898, his foremost disciple Ramanandar was shattered. After the burial of his Guru Murugadaasar, Ramanandar constructed a temple for Lord Dandapani (Muruga) at the same spot where his Guru's body was interned. Ramanandar paid his tribute to his Guru in immortal lines. The broad meaning of these lines is as follows: 'Oh! The King of Poesy and Poetry from Tiruvamathur! One who is capable of producing all genres of literature and historic Prabandhams! Oh true devotee of Lord Muruga! Pray shower your benediction on me – your disciple – so that I can waft the fragrance of your name and fame!'

Long before Mahakavi Bharathi wrote his nationalist and patriotic poems, Murugadaasar wrote his Angiliyar Andhathi. In this work, he made it clear that the British Rule in India was anti-people, anti-Hindu and anti-national. Through his poems, Murugadaasar declared that the British Government in India consisted of mean and crude criminals. The British promoted indiscipline among the people through the encouragement of consumption of alcoholic liquor, opium and other evil habits. They were responsible for promoting and popularizing cow slaughter. The British were destroying Tamil culture and Tamil civilization through their misdeeds and foul acts. This is how Murugadaasar described the British Indian scene. The verses of great anguish and sorrow of Murugadaasar, arising from the atrocities of British Rule in India, can never be forgotten. The great English poet Shelley said that the Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World. Vannacharabam Thandapani Swamigal (Murugadaasar) was a man of clairvoyant vision who saw clearly through the grim tragedy of British Rule in India in his time and warned the people against the inherent dangers of their continuous and continued misrule. In every sense of the word Vannacharabam

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Dandapani Swamigal (Murugadaasar) was a man of God and legitimately belonged to the great tradition of saints and sages of ancient India. The greatest truths are the simplest; and so are the greatest men. Murugadaasar showed through his extraordinary life and example that simplicity of character is no hindrance to subtlety of intellect. His daily message to all of us is *'Teach us Delight in simple things'*.

Life is not complex. We are complex.

Life is simple, and the simple thing is the right thing.

His timeless message to us all can be put in these glowing words of **John Wesley** (1703-1791):

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

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22

A LITTERATEUR PAR EXCELLENCE

Tamil literature is extremely rich in devotional poetry, almost unparalleled in the literature in any other language. Unfortunately, however, those who have no knowledge of the Tamil language—and I am sorry to say—even many whose mother-tongue happens to be Tamil, are not today fully aware of the sublime beauty and greatness of this class of Tamil literature. In the songs of 12 Alwars and 63 Nayanmars such literature reached its highest-watermark. These men of God composed in all more than 16000 devotional hymns. The name of the Saivite Saint Manickavasagar is one of the greatest in the history of Tamil Devotional Literature and his magnum opus is the Thiruvachakam.

Thiruvachakamani K M Balasubramaniam (1908-1974)

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Thiruvachakam of Manickavasagar has the unique distinction of combining intense religious fervour with extraordinary literary insight. Simple and at the same time profound, it plumbs the depths of human emotions even as it reaches heights of philosophic perception, poetic feeling and spiritual ecstasy. More than 100 years ago **Dr. G. U. Pope (1820-1908)**, a great lover of Tamil Literature, felt spiritually drawn to this **'gem sweet and serene'** and offered to the non-Tamil-knowing public of the Western world an English translation. Almost 58 years later, Thiruvachakamani K M Balasubramaniam (KMB), a great scholar

ஸ்ரீ மாணிக்கவாசக சுவாமிகள்

அருளிச்செய்த

தி ரு வா ச க ம்

இதில்

திருவாசகத் தமிழ் மூலமும்

அதன்

ஆங்கில மொழிபெயர்ப்புச் செய்யுட்களும்,

குறிப்புக்களும் விளக்கங்களும்

அடங்கியுள்ளன.

மொழிபெயர்ப்பு :

திருவாசகமணி

கே. எம். பாலசுப்பிரமணியம், பி.ஏ., பி.எல்.

வெளியிடுவோர் :

சென்னமல்லீஸ்வரர், சென்னகேசவப்பெருமான்

தேவஸ்தானம், சென்னை-3.

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and devotee of Bhagwan Nataraja, came forward with a beautiful translation in English verse of the whole of Thiruvachakam in 1958. It was published by Chennamalleeswarar, Chennakesavapperumal Devasthanam, Chennai.

I am of the view that this great work, more than any other, will help to acquaint those who cannot have the pleasure of reading the Tamil original, with the best of Tamil poetry and Tamil Saiva Siddantha philosophy. Paying a rich and fitting tribute to **Thiruvachakamani KMB,** M.Bhakatavatsalam, the then Home Minister of Madras State said in 1958, *'For one who has delved deep into this treasure-house of feeling, fervour and faith, for one who has understood the teachings and tenets of this rich human philosophy so well as to interpret it to alien schools, for one who must have chanted the magic spell of Thiruvachakam a thousand times before he moulded a foreign medium to sing no less eloquently this song of the soul, for one who has achieved all this in the spirit of dedication, there can be no greater reward than the rich satisfaction and fulfillment that flow from the accomplishment of such a task.'*

Dr. G. U. Pope's English translation of Thiruvachakam was published by the Oxford University Press in England in 1900. Thiruvachakamani KMB made a careful study of Dr. Pope's translation and meticulously added his comments and notes, carefully recording the points of his agreement as well as disagreement with Dr. Pope.Born in the ancient Saivite tradition, he was able to effortlessly enter into the spirit of Thiruvachakkam. A really first-rate translation demanded from the translator not only a thorough knowledge of the two languages—Tamil and English—but also a capacity to be infused with the spirit of the original. KMB was eminently qualified for such a magnificent undertaking. The spiritual ecstasy, lyrical rapture and mystical experiences of the original Thiruvachakam were fully captured by KMB in his classic English translation. It was in recognition of his devotion to this great work that he was honoured with the title of **THIRUVACHAKAMANI** by Dharamapuram Adheenam.

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KMB was born on 9 December 1908 at Karur. His father was Muthuswami Pillai and Mother Swarathammal. He was brought up in the glorious tradition of Saivism and Saiva Siddantha by his parents. After completing his college education in St. Joseph's College, Trichy, he came to Madras and joined the Law College. After taking his B.L. Degree, KMB started his career as an Advocate in the High Court of Madras. Later he was employed as Provincial Song Publicity Officer. Starting as a politician and as an atheist, he was the first Tamil scholar to translate the radical writings of Robert G Ingersoll (1833-1899) into Tamil. In the last three decades of his life he became totally absorbed in the spiritual treasures of Thiruvachakam and Saiva Siddhanta.

It is very moving to read the preface of Thiruvachakamani KMB to his great work. Let us hear him: 'That day in the year 1948 just a decade ago when Dr. S. Kumaraswami Pillai, our beloved father in law presented us with a copy of Dr. G. U. Pope's Translation of Thiruvachakam and Heiler's Book on Prayer, has proved a red-letter day in our humble life. It is the most eventful gift which has proved efficacious and but for that, our accidental introduction to the Reverend Doctor by another Doctor, we wonder if we could ever have become the author of this translation of Thiruvachakam. Hence we express our gratitude to that good and noble soul — Dr. S. Kumaraswami Pillai— for his seasoned gift of a seed which has given us this yield.'

Before he brought out his full and complete translation of Thiruvacakam in 1958, he had produced a small volume titled 'A Garland of Praise of Manickavasakar'—a Centum of Tamil stanzas praising the Saint and commenting on his teachings. V.Kalyanasundara Mudaliar (popularly known as Thiru.vi.ka) wrote a foreword to that book in which he referred to KMB as Thiruvachakam Balasubramaniam. Later the Head of Dharmapuram Adheenam modified that nomenclature as Thiruvachakamani K. M. Balasubramaniam (KMB). Sri KMB was a good speaker in English. The Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri referred to his speech in these words: 'It is a pleasure to me to testify to his skill in the use of English either way. He is a master of idiomatic, humorous

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ஓம்
சிவமயம்
திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

திருவாசகம்

1. சிவபுராணம்

சிவனது அநாதி முறைமையான பழமை

திருப்பெருந்துறையில் அருளியது
மணிவாசகர்
திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

வாழ்த்து

நமச்சிவாய வாஅழ்க நாதன்தாள் வாழ்க
இமைப்பொழுதும் என்நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான் தாள்வாழ்க
கோகழி யாண்ட குருமணிதன் தாள்வாழ்க
ஆகம மாகிநின்று அண்ணிப்பான் தாள்வாழ்க
ஏகன் அநேகன் இறைவன் அடிவாழ்க
வேகம் கெடுத்தாண்ட வேந்தன் அடிவெல்க

TIRUVACHAKAM
OR
THE SACRED UTTERANCE

I. SIVAPURANAM OR SIVAN'S WAYS OF OLD

Salutations

Namasivaya hail! Hail to the Foot of the Lord!
Hail the Foot of Him Who does not part
Even for a twinkling from my heart!
Hail the Foot of th' Gem of Teacher ruling in Kokazhi!
Hail the Foot of Him Who has become
The Agamas and Who does sweetly bide!
Hail the Foot of the One, the Not One and the Immanent Lord!
Victory to the Foot of the King Who calmed
The storm within the soul and made me His!

and highly cultivated expression and in speech is fluent, effective and interesting.' Many literary critics have appreciated the English prose style of KMB by observing that he followed the tradition of the great English essayist A. G. Gardiner. In 1957, the Universities of Allahabad and Benares invited Thiruvachakamani K.M.Balasubramaniam to deliver public lectures on Saiva

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Siddhanta Metaphysics and they were greatly appreciated by one and all in Northern India.

We can see many interesting parallels between Dr. G. U. Pope's Translation published in 1900 and Thiruvachakamani KMB's Translation published in 1958.

Dr.Pope published his work after 10 years of hard work and intensive studies. Thiruvachakamani KMB also took 10 years to complete his work from 1948 to 1958. Thiruvachakamani KMB quoted the following words of Dr. G. U. Pope from his preface to his English translation of 1900: 'The poems which are here edited, translated and annotated are recited daily in all the great Saiva temples of South India, are on everyone's lips and are as dear to the hearts of vast multitudes of excellent people there, as the Psalms of David are to the Jews and Christians.' The poems of Saint Manickavasagar are daily sung throughout Tamilnadu with tears of rapture, and committed to memory in every Shiva Temple by the people, amongst whom it is a traditional saying that *'He whose heart is not melted by the Thiruvachakam must have a stone for a heart.'*

I have presented above the first page from Thiruvachakamani K. M. Balasubramaniam's classic translation.

We can see the beauty of his translation marked by great fidelity to the letter and spirit of the original. We can see how in these beautiful translations, Thiruvachakamani's tetrametres and pentametres and hexametres and heptametres move with subtle pleasing and graceful rhythm. His verses are 'as rubies bright with passions quivering redness in the heart'. The great poet Tennyson's lines are applicable to him.

'To have the deep poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame'

Thiruvachakamani moves us with his deep poetic heart. His numbers flow with clarity and mellifluousness even as the original verses flow:

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'Though deep yet clear, gentle yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without over-flowing full'

Thiruvachakamani KMB's translation does ample justice to Saint Manickavasagar's sacred utterances and their real import with special reference to the essential tenets of Saiva Siddhanta Metaphysics underlying them. Thiruvachakamani KMB asserts with authority: "Manickavasagar is traditionally called 'Sivan by virtue of His Gnanam' (Arivar Sivan). This appellation of a Supreme and unparalleled nature is the unique attribute of our Saint; even Gnanasambandar cannot lay claim to it.... Manickavachagar is equal to Bhagwan Shiva; *Thiruvachakkam is equal to Manickavasagar: therefore, Thiruvachakkam is equal to Bhagwan Shiva. That this equality is not a matter of mere algebraic equation alone but a well-attested fact of history is evident from the story of the Saint pointing out the Bhagwan of Ponnambalam as the import and meaning of his immortal work Thiruvachakkam. Hence, Thiruvachakkam is a substitute for Sivam in the individual pooja even as Manickavasagar is the substitute for Sivam in the Perundhurai-Shrine pooja."*

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A MUSICAL JEWEL OF RAJA SARFOJI'S REIGN

Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (1855 – 1942) (Uttamadhana puram Venkatasubbaiyer Swaminatha Iyer) was a Tamil scholar and researcher who was instrumental in bringing many long-forgotten works of classical Tamil literature to light.

His singular effort over five decades brought to light major literary works in Tamil and contributed vastly to the enrichment of Tamil literary heritage. Dr. Iyer published over 91 books in his lifetime, on a variety of matters connected with classical Tamil literature, and collected 3067 paper manuscripts, palm leaf manuscripts and notes of various kinds. He is affectionately called 'Tamil Thatha' (Grand Oldman of Tamil).

Dr U. V Swaminatha Iyer (1855-1942)

Another significant contribution made by Dr U. V. Swaminatha Iyer was in the realm of Tamil music. Until Swaminatha Iyer published

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the Silappatikaram , Pattupattu and Ettuthokai, music was a grey area in Tamil research. During the previous four centuries, Telugu and Sanskrit dominated the music scene in Tamil Nadu in the absence of any valuable and authentic information on Tamil music. Swaminatha Iyer's publications threw light on the glorious traditions of Tamil music in the earlier centuries and paved the way for serious research on the subject. As the son of a famous musician of his time, Swaminatha Iyer learnt music from Gopalakrishna Bharathi, an outstanding musical exponent and the author of Nandanar Charithiram.

In the popular Tamil Journal 'Kalaimagal' in 1935, Dr Swaminatha Iyer wrote a fascinating article titled 'Shankara bharanam Narasaiyer'. 'Shankarabharanam Narasaiyer' was a contemporary of Raja Sarfoji, a Mahratta ruler. The Mahratta rulers of Thanjavur in the late 18th century and the first half of the 19th century were all great lovers and patrons of Carnatic Music. Thanks to their patronage, Thanjavur became the Mecca of Carnatic Music.Great musicians from different, parts of Madras Presidency, made a beeline for Thanjavur seeking the recognition, approval and patronage of the Maharatta Rulers. Several legendary figures and luminaries in the world of Carnatic music like 'Veena' Perumal Iyer, 'Pallavi' Gopala Iyer, 'Irattai Pallavi' Shivaretma Iyer; 'Ganam' Krishna Iyer, 'Chowklam' Srinivasa Iyengar, 'Thodi' Seetharama Iyer' and others all basked in the sunshine of support and sustenance provided by the Mahratta rulers of Thanjavur during this period.

The great Acharya and Guru for most of these musicians was Pachaimyrian Adiappa Iyer. One of his most distinguished students was 'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyer whose name and fame became legendary during the days of Raja Sarfoji of Thanjavur, On one occasion in the Royal presence of Raja Sarfoji of Thanjavur, he delineated the Shankarabharanam Raga and his mellifluous raga alapana, followed by pallavi and kalpana swara, took the Royal audience to unprecedented heights of ecstasy and

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joy. Raja Sarfoji, himself a great connoisseur of Carnatic music exclaimed: 'I have not heard such an exquisite rendering of Shankarabharaman in my entire life.'

RAJA SARFOJI
(1777-1832) HE WAS RULER OF THANJAVUR
FROM 1798 TO 1832

Raja Sarfoji spontaneously conferred upon Narasaiyar the Royal title of **'SHANKARABHARANAM' NARASAIYER.** This happened in the twenties of the 19th century. From that day onwards, the rendering of Shankarabharanam Raga by Narasaiyar became famous and well-known through out Madras Presidency.

Once 'Sharlkarabharanam' Narasaiyar found himself in a state of personal financial crisis and sought the help of a landlord called Ramabhadra Moopanar of Kapisthalam who was also a distinguished patron of Carnatic Music. The following conversation is reported to have ensued between 'Shartkarabharanam' Narasaiyar and Kapisthalam Ramabhadra Moopanar:

Narasaiyar: 'I am in a state of an unforeseen financial crisis. I feel delicate to seek your help to bail me out of this crisis. May I request you to give me a shortterm loan to enable me to get out of this crisis?'

Ramabhadra Moopanar: 'Oh! You want a loan! How much do you require?'

Narasaiyer: '80 sovereigns of gold'

Ramabhadra Moopanar : 'You want a loan. Can you offer any security for hypothecation?'

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Narasaiyar: "Oh yes"

Ramabhadra Moopanar: What can you offer for hypothecation?'

Narasaiyar: 'I can offer an invaluable 'Abharanam' as security for the loan'.

Ramabhadra Moopanar: 'Let me see it'.

Narasaiyar: I am afraid you cannot see that 'Abharanam'. That 'Abharanam' is my own. You and others can of course hear it. It is the 'Shakarabharanam' Raga which has been patented to me in perpetuity by our great 'Raja Sarfoji' of Thanjavur. I am ready to offer this Sharakarabharanam as security for your loan and till I return it I swear an oath that I will not sing this raga in any of my public performances.

Ramabhadra Moopanar: 'If that be so you can take the loan after giving me a promissory note to that effect.'

And so the story goes that Narasaiyar took the loan of 80 sovereigns from Kapisthalam Ramambhadra Moopanar: True to his pledged word, he stopped rendering Sankarabharanam raga in all his public performances thereafter: The large crowds which used to throng his Kutcheries started missing his Shankarabharana Raga with nostalgia and regret.

During this time there lived in Kumbakonam a distinguished and wealthy servant of the English East India Company called Appuraya. As he was very close to a powerful English functionary called Wallis of the English East India Company he came to be known as 'Wallis' Appuraya. Once there was a wedding in the house of Wallis Appuraya.

'Wallis' Appuraya had invited all the great Carnatic musicians of the day to give music performances at this wedding. Shankarabharanam Narasaiyar was one of the most distinguished invitees.

When Shankarabharanam Narasaiyar came to the dais to sing, 'Wallis' Appuraya requested him to start his performance with a Varnam in Shankarabharanam. The following conversation took place between them on this occasion.

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'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyar: 'I beg your pardon. I cannot accommodate your request to sing Shankarabharanam Varnam. I am not in a position to do so.'

'Wallis' Appuraya: 'Why not?' (a little upset)

'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyar: 'I am sorry to tell you that I have already offered my royally patented Shankarabharanam Raga as security to a person who has grated me a loan. I have also given him a 'promissory' note giving an assurance to the effect that I will not sing Shankarabharanam Raga till I return the loan.'

'Wallis' Appuraya: ' What an amazing thing? I have never heard of an aesthetic and spiritual thing like a raga being hypothecated for a loan. Anyway let that be. Can you kindly tell me how much loan you have taken? I am very keen and anxious to settle your loan immediately in order to set you free to sing Shankarabharanam Raga today at my family wedding. Nothing can give me greater joy and peace than your singing the Shankarabharanam Raga.'

Thereafter 'Wallis' Appuraya immediately sent the loan amount of 80 gold sovereigns due, together with interest to Kapisthalam Ramabhadra Moopanar and requested him to return the promissory note duly discharged to 'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyar: On receipt of the loan amount from 'Wallis' Appuraya, Kapisthalam Ramabhadra Moapanar rushed to Kumbakonam.

A memorable meeting took place between 'Wallis' Appuraya, 'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyar and Kapisthalam Ramabhadra Moopanar. Moopanar said with great feeling and emotion. If only 'Shankarabharanam' Naraisaiyar had sought my financial assistance as of right without asking for a loan I would have helped him immediately, I was greatly hurt by his request for the grant of a loan. Since he was formal and officious in his approach towards me despite my being his fan and patron, I too became formal in my response insisting upon the procedure of hypothecation and a promissory note.'

Instantaneously Kapisthalam Ramabhadra Moopanar handed over the 80 sovereigns together with interest to 'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyar with the following observation

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with warmth and affection: *'I have no right to put a great Raga like Shankarabharanam in a man-made financial bondage. I voluntarily submit myself to the punishment of forfeiture of the loan amount of 80 sovereigns of gold together with interest to 'Shankarabharanam' Narasaiyar.'* It was indeed a warm and noble gesture.

The great dramatist Bharatha who wrote the Natya Shastra was absolutely right when he said that great artistes cannot perform in a cultural vacuum and in order to perform greatly, they require great audiences all the time.

No wonder we remember the days of Raja Sarfoji with great nostalgia and affection. It was an age of great culture and humanism. It was an age bf enlightenment and refinement. Learned and distinguished men in every creative field walked with their heads erect and men in imperial authority bowed to them.

We live today amidst ruins of a **'Colossal Wreck'.** Our culture today is a flat expanse of rubble. Is it surprising that we are run down? We are desperate, yet we don't care much any more. We are timid, yet we cannot be shocked. We are inert underneath our restless busyness. We are aesthetically and culturally destitute in our plenty. We are homeless in our homes. What should be there to hold in our hands, is not. Our great culture is gone. It has left us terribly alone. In its devastation it cannot even mock us anymore, sneer at the lost time whimpering for its mother. That stage too is also over. Our culture is past cruelty. It is wrecked. It is dead.

All men with passion for culture and refinement should join together and launch a crusade for the revival of our ancient culture today, remembering the immortal words of *Swami Vivekananda:* **'True feelings, passions, sentiments and emotions are indeed the gastric juices of the soul.'** Most people today in this sordid world of information technology, tend to view culture as a gastric juice of the stomach. We should not allow the ruthless forces of privatization and globalization to destroy our souls.

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SALUTATIONS TO SEKKIZHAR ADIPPODI DR T.N. RAMACHANDRAN (TNR)

My esteemed friend **Dr T. N. Ramachandran,** popularly known as **Dr TNR,** has completed 75 years of very fruitful and creative life marked by many splendours. An unsurpassed scholar in Tamil and English; an acknowledged authority on Tamil Saivism and Saiva Sidhanta; a prolific writer on several facets of Tamil hagiographical literature; a versatile translator of Tamil Saivite scriptures like Tiruvachakam,

Tirukkovaiyar, Tirumandiram, Periyapuranam, The Hymns of Kaaraikkaal Ammaiyaar like Tiruaalangkaattu Moottha Tiruppatikam – 1, Tiruaalangkaattu Moottha Tiruppatikam – 2, Tiruyirattaimanimaalai and Arputatthiruvantaati — Dr TNR is not just a man but is indeed a procession of men. Dr TNR is all this and more.

I offer my humble and reverential salutations to him as he enters his 76th year of a life of creative fulfillment. In my view he is a phenomenon. What is a phenomenon? A phenomenon is something very great, extraordinary and mysterious. A phenomenon is always a fact, an object of experience. This is how I shall approach and describe Dr TNR. When I asked Dr TNR as to how he came to be known as Sekkizhar

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Adippodi, he told me with great humility and reverence: "In 1960 I had the privilege and good fortune of attending the divine Discourses on Periyapuranam by Sukhabrahmam Ramaswami Sastrigal at Thanjavur. These discourses were held at KHS School Ground in Thanjavur for a period of 40 days. It was Tiruvachakamani K.M Balasubramaniam who took me to hear the discourses of Sukhabrahmam Ramaswami Sastrigal. I came under the divine spell of Periyapuranam and the spiritual benediction of Sekkizhar who composed Periyapuranam. From that moment Sekkizhar became my Maanaseeka-guru."

Dr TNR was born on 13 August, 1934 at Thirunallam in the old Tanjore District of Madras Presidency in British India. His early childhood was spent at Tillaistanam near Tiruvaiyar in the Same District. He was enrolled as an advocate of the High Court of Judicature, Madras on August 9, 1956. Despite his professional preoccupations as a busy lawyer, he always found his time for studying in depth the great literatures of both Tamil and English with remarkable enthusiasm and dedication. He came into living contact with classical Tamil literature by learning at the feet of Pandita Vidwan T. V. Gopala Iyer who was one of the foremost Tamil scholars of Tamil Nadu. His most valuable quality is his deep and unquenchable love of world literature, in particular of poetry, of all periods and peoples.

1961 was a turning point in Dr TNR's life. He came into close contact with Triloka Sitaram – the Telugu born metaphysical Tamil poet. Dr TNR translated the Tamil poems of Triloka Sitaram in the bi-lingual (English and Tamil) journal called Shivaji (originally started in Tamil by Triloka Sitaram). The sudden death of his bosom friend Triloka Sitaram was a great shock to Dr TNR. Just as the great English poet Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) was shattered by the untimely death of his friend Arthur Hallam, so also Dr TNR was shattered by his friend's demise. Dr TNR found himself anchorless and rudderless in the unchartered sea of an unknown vacuum. It was at that moment of great sorrow and poignant loneliness. Dr TNR turned to Saint Sekkizhar for solace and comfort. I am quite sure that as a great lover and master

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of English literature, the following timeless and sublime words of Lord Tennyson must have rushed to his besieged mind and tortured soul at that moment:

'So runs my dream, but what am I?
An infant crying in the night
An infant crying for the light
And with no language but a cry.'

Right from the days of his childhood, Dr TNR was as ardent admirer and lover of Mahakavi Bharati's poetry. I distinctly recall Dr TNR telling me with glowing pride and passion that it was Mahakavi Bharati who revealed to him in a Viswaroopa form the manifold, elemental and transcendental greatness of Tamil language and literature. It is not therefore surprising that Dr TNR took to translating some of the works of Mahakavi Bharati.

In 1980 Dr TNR's translation of Vinayakar Naan Mani Maalai appeared. Dr Prema Nandakumar in her preface rightly observed: 'Much care and study has preceded the translation of Vinayakar Naan Mani Maalai and the lover of Bharatiana is revealed at each turn. I am sure others will profit by reading this translation as much as I have profited.'

Dr TNR's translation of Kuyil Paattu also came in 1980. Professor K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar in his magisterial foreword paid a rich tribute to Dr TNR in these words: ' Kuyil Paattu has been translated by others too, but Dr TNR's has its own distinctive marks and cumulative distinction. Dr TNR loves Bharati, this side of idolatry, he is widely read in Tamil and (what is more surprising)in world literature and he has studied Tamil classics in depth. His memory is sharp and uncanny; it is almost a computer memory which registers poetic and verbal parallels from the world's ends with something akin to automatic efficiency. ... For one thing, steeped as he is in the world's poetry, his own writing (or translation-language) inevitably reveals the influence of this eclectic and sumptuous diet. For another, the opulent ensemble of so many poetic flashes projects a veritable democracy of letters,

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and to some extent, demonstrates the fact of the interpenetration of poetic imagination and poetic utterance the world over. ...To read Kuyil Paattu, to turn to the Notes, to be lured to this universal congress of poets, mystics and thinkers, all this is a singular, aesthetic and emotional experience, and there is no doubt that, when the reader returns to the text, he has a feeling of exhilaration and fulfillment.'" Dr TNR has also translated Kannan Paattu and Paanchaali Shapadham of Mahakavi Bharati.

Dr. TNR is gentle, dignified and wholly uncompetitive. He is interested in the character of others, and sensitive to their feelings, particularly of those who, like himself, have wished to walk by themselves alone and found it difficult to fit in with the tyranny of established social patterns. His generous, uncalculating character, his refusal to compromise with whatever that seems to him to distort or ignore or even embellish experience, his distinction as an original and profound thinker and above all his nobility as a human being – these great qualities of head and heart of Dr TNR have always overwhelmed me. Let me now deal with Dr TNR's work of translations of Tamil Classics and Tamil scriptures in greater detail.

Earlier, I had referred to the incomparably brilliant translation of the poems of Mahakavi Bharatiyar like Kuyil Pattu (1980), and Kannan Pattu (1980) done by Sekkizhar Adippodi Dr. TNR. He is also the versatile translator of Tamil Saivite Scriptures like Tiruvachakam, Tirukkovaiyar, Tirumandiram, Periyapuranam, The Hymns of Kaaraikkaal Ammaiyaar like Tiruaalangkaattu Moottha Tiruppatikam(1), Tiruaalangkaattu Moottha Tiruppatikam(2), Tiruyirattaimanimaalai and Arputatthiruvantaati.

The Tirukkovaiyar is also known as ***Tirucchitrampalak-kovaiyar.*** It is exclusively a poem on Akam and it contains 400 stanzas beautifully sung by the brilliant saint-poet Manickavaachakar. Appar is known for his service to the Allmighty. Sambandhar is known for his melodious songs and hymns. Manickavaachakar is

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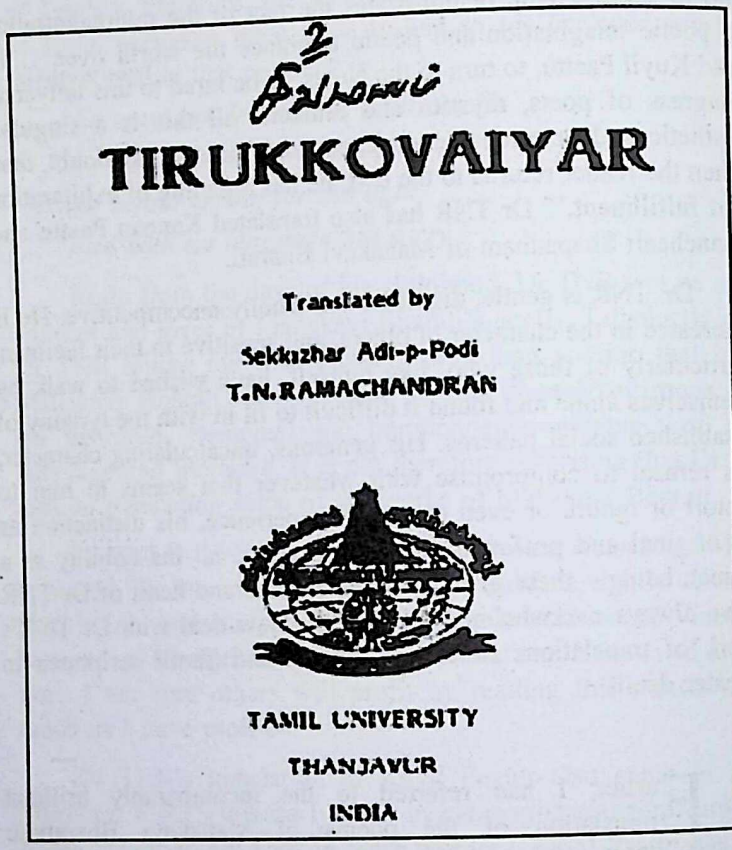

Front page of DR TNR's Book, TIRUKKOVAIYAR

known for his outburst and flow of his personal experience and feelings of the God-head leavened by spiritual ecstasy.

Sekkizhar Adippodi DR.T.N.R has translated the whole of Tirukkovaiyar into English. This work was published by Tamil University, Thanjavur in 1989. Dr S. Agesthialingom, internationally known linguistic Tamil scholar and Vice Chancellor of Tamil University, Thanjavur wrote thus in his foreword to this work of DR TNR:

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"It is true that while the Tiruvaachakam is well known both in the West and the East, the Tirukkovaiyar is yet to make its impact. In his encyclopedic survey of Hinduism (Hindu World - 1968), Benjamin Walker refers to the Tiruvaachakam, but not to the Tirukkovaiyar. Even the famous work of A.L Basham (The Wonder of India - 1954) makes no reference to the Tirukkovaiyar. However, Basham has repaired this omission when he edited the book "A Cultural History of India" (Oxford University Press, 1975). It was therefore felt by litterateurs that an English version of Tirukkovaiyar was a desideratum. It was in the fitness of things that Sekkizhar Adippodi DR.T.N.R came forward to flex his transcreative muscle with a rendering in English of the Tirukkovaiyar."

KOVAI — a singular genre, though sui generis — is a unique product of the Tamil genius. Manickavaachakar's Tirukkovaiyar belongs to this category. A layer of divinely sublime eroticism covers its esoteric content. According to the devout Saivites, in the spiritual context of the irrepressible urge to see Lord Siva face to face, Tirukkovaiyar helps every devotee to "grow into God".

Kovai literature in general and Tirukkovaiyar in particular is animated by tenderness and intimacy and yet bearing the unique stamp of timeless anonymity. The participating pilgrims of faith choose to remain nameless for ever. This kind of intensely passionate anonymity adorns the dramatis personae of Tirukkovaiyar and that is why this great work has an universal appeal —that mocks at Time — remaining forever, unaltered and imperishable. According to the devotees of Saiva Sidhanta, in the inner world of the transcendental spirit there are no needs, no individuals. The glowing prayer of Saint Manickavaachakar is: "Per vednen Oor venden" (Neither name nor place do I seek). The Lord too is nameless: truly speaking, is unnamable.

If I can paraphrase the prayer of Kovai literature in general, and Tirukkovaiyar in particular, perhaps it might run as follows:

"If you want to have peace,
Seek it in His Namelessness.

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If you want to see God,
Chant His Holy Namelessness.
If you wish for freedom and joy,
Find it in His Namelessness.
If you aspire for life eternal,
On your tongue have His Namelessness.
Namelessness is your path,
Namelessness is your goal.
Namelessness is the means,
Namelessness is the end.
Namelessness is the truth,
Namelessness is God."

As I mentioned earlier, Tirukkovaiyar belongs to the Akam species of divine literature. Akam which is Veedu is the final destination (ultima thule) of life's journey. The theme is love. The episodes of unquenchable love range from pre-marital 'clandestine' love at first sight at one end to marital and post-nuptial life of love at the other, where love 'ages' with out losing its freshness and variegated charm. Did not the world-poet Shakespeare say: "Age cannot wither her, not custom stale her infinite variety". Eventually the life of love gains that symbolism which is the divine consummation to be fervently and devoutly wished and prayed for.

The great Tamil savant **Dr U.V. Swaminatha Iyer** (1855-1942) made himself immortal not only through his discovery and publication of the Tamil Sangam classics, but also through his masterly and timeless prefaces and editorial notes / comments. Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) made himself immortal through his long prefaces to his great dramatic works. Sekkizhar Adippodi DR TNR has also written a truly magnificent introduction to his work of English translation of Tirukkovaiyar.

According to DR TNR, the Tolkappiyam, the most ancient of works now extant in Tamil, is a work on grammar. It contains a chapter on poetics. The third division of this work is called Purulatikaram and this provides the living source for the study of

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LOVE as treated by the ancient Tamils. Conventions regulating Akam and Puram are enunciated here in great detail.

The various stages and facets and dimensions of Romantic Love — unrequited love, union, parting, waiting, pining during the absence of husband, love-quarrel and their causes coming under uri-p-porul in relation to tinais, have been summarised by Dr TNR in his introductionAccording to Dr TNR Love-theme as handled by Sankam literature marks the Tirukkovaiyar, with this difference. While the Akam pieces of Sankam are unconnected monologues, the Tirukkovaiyar is not so. It weaves the monologues and sometimes the dialogues too, into sequential narrative. Kovai means order. Isolated pieces are ordered into an eloquent narrative in a Kovai work. In the Tirukkovaiyar, Veda and Agama, Love and Literature, Logic and Grammar are all ordered into a poetical pattern which is sublime.

புணர்தல் பிரிதல் விருத்த விரங்கல்
ஊடலவற்றி னிமித்த மென்றிவை
தேருங் காலைத் திணைக்குரிப் பொருளே.

Union takes place in *Kurinji*, parting in *Palai*; expectant waiting in *Mullai*; pining in *Neytal*; bouderie in *Marutam*.

I am giving below a sample of the sublime translation of Dr TNR's translation of verse 1 of Tirukkovaiyar.

I. NATURAL UNION

1. Sight

The hero speaks:

Lotus of ever-increasing beauty,
Nelumboes of ever-increasing glory,
Colourful *Kumizh* bright that blooms
In the grove of Lord's *Tillai*,
Konku and goodly *Kantal*:
With these is wrought, her frame, as a garland
Of ever-increasing fragrance divine;
She is a lithe liana endowed
With the swan's own gait.
Behold her, beauteously blazing
Like *Kama's* victorious pennant.

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In my view, **Sekkizhar Adippodi Dr. TNR's** work of translation of Tirukkovaiyar is a truly a great work of art by itself. A bad work of translation only transmits information. A sublime work of translation like that of Dr TNR succeeds in performing a divine transmitting function. He succeeds in transmitting the unfathomable, the mysterious and the 'poetic' everlasting something of Tirukkovaiyar. Dr TNR is able to do it because he is also a poet. The life of the original Tirukkovaiyar attains in Dr TNR's translation an ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering. Being a special and high form of life, this flowering is governed by a special, high purposiveness. The relationship between life and purposiveness, seemingly obvious yet almost beyond the grasp of the intellect, reveals itself only if the ultimate purpose toward which all single functions tend is sought not in its own sphere but in a higher one. All purposeful manifestations of life, including their purposiveness, in the final analysis have their end not in life, but in the expression of its elemental and primordial nature, in the representation of its everlasting significance. Translation thus ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages. It cannot possibly reveal or establish this hidden relationship itself; but it can represent it by realizing it in embryonic or intensive form. *This representation of hidden significance through an embryonic attempt at making it visible is of so singular a nature that it is rarely met with in the sphere of nonlinguistic life. As for the posited central kinship of languages, it is marked by a distinctive convergence. Languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express. This is the timeless message given to us by this great literary sage, savant and seer Sekkizhar Adippodi DR TNR. This work of translation of Dr TNR, as an oracular voice from time to time and from age to age, will ring again and again across centuries.*

I have described as to how SEKKIZHAR ADIPPODI Dr. TNR has been hailed as a **'Master Translator'** by many great international scholars and critics. His lifelong friend

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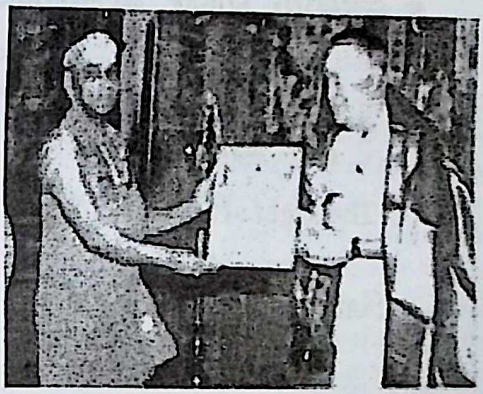
Professor K.G. Sheshadri has said: "It is perhaps a little difficult to present a true picture of a tower if you stand too close to its base and look up.

"The present writer's difficulty is the same.....I can bear happy witness to this bibliognost's massive scholarship, eclectic tastes, passionate bibliolatry and insatiable bibliophilism. His library at Thanjavur acquired at considerable sacrifice is the envy of professors like me."



DR TNR honoured by Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam

I have already referred to Dr. TNR's translation of Saiva Thirumurais and works of Mahakavi Bharathiar. He has translated the hymns of Kaaraikkal Ammayar. He has also translated the classics of Saiva Siddhanta like Saint Umapathi Sivam's 'Tiruvarut Payan'(The Fruit of Grace Divine), 'Vina Venpaa'(Interrogation in Verse), 'Kodi-k-Kavi' (The Flag Hymn), and 'Unmai Neri Vilakkam' (The Light of Righteous Way). I am giving below a sample of Dr TNR's translation of a verse from 'Unmai Neri Vilakkam':

I have derived immense benefit by reading a brilliant essay of Dr. TNR giving an outline of Saiva Siddhanta with an eagle's swoop-like vision. In this essay he has summed up the quintessence of Saiva Siddhanta in this manner: *'Saiva Siddhanta is the End of Science, the Ultimate of Philosophy and*

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the Absolute of Metaphysics. Gnaanam is knowledge leading to Shivam. Bhodham is realization of that knowledge. Mere faith is not Bhodham. Bhodham is realization, unclouded illumination, flawless enlightenment, unalloyed bliss'.

உ

ஸ்ரீ உமாபதி சிவம் அருளிய

உண்மை நெறி விளக்கம்

ஆங்கிலவாக்கம் :

சேக்கிழார் அடிப்பொடி.

தி.ந. இராமச்சந்திரன்

"The Light of Righteous Way"

of

Saint Umapati Sivam

Englished by

Sekkizhaar Adi-p-Podi T.N. RAMACHANDRAN

தத்துவரூபம் - தரிசனம் - சுத்தி

(1) மண்முதல் சிவம தீறாய் வடிவுகாண் பதுவே ரூபம்
மண்முதல் சிவம தீறாய் மலஞ்சடம் என்றல் காட்சி :
மண்முதல் சிவம தீறாய் வகையதில் தானி லாது
கண்நுதல் அருளால் நீங்கல் சுத்தியாய்க் கருதுமன்றே.

Tattwa Rupam - darsanam - Suddhi

To comprehend tattwas six and thirty
From Earth to Sivam is yelept "Rupam ;"
To know the tattwas from Earth to Sivam
For certain, as insentient, is "Darshan;"
To stand without the pale of these tattwas
And to rid them by the Grace of th' Brow - Eyed
Is indeed deemed "Suddhi" by the learned. 1

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As a master translator of Tamil scriptures and Tamil classics, Dr TNR is unrivalled. As translation is a mode of its own, the task of the translator, too, may be regarded as distinct and clearly differentiated from the task of the poet. The translator's task consists in finding that intended effect (Intention) upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it THE ECHO OF THE ORIGINAL. This is the cardinal feature of any soulful translation which basically differentiates it from the poet's work.

Here the immortal words of Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), a German-Jewish man of letters are very relevant and wholly applicable to the work of Dr TNR: *'Unlike a work of literature, translation does not find itself in the centre of the language forest but on the outside facing the wooded ridge; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where THE ECHO is able to give in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one ..... And this very language, whose divination and description is the only perfection a philosopher can hope for, is concealed in a concentrated fashion in great translations.'*

Judicial fidelity and transfixing freedom are the qualities characterizing Dr TNR's work of translation. In every work of translation done by Dr TNR, the real spirit of his transparent translation comes out; it does not manually and mechanically cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully, bringing out the timeless resonance of the echo of the original text. Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point, with this touch rather than with the point setting the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity, a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, there upon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux. Such a kind of effect is achieved with splendid linguistic ease by Sekkizhar Adi-Ppodi DR TNR with out affecting the spiritual message, in all his translations.

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The fundamental intellectual seeds of Dr TNR's intellectual brilliance and development were shown as early as in 1959 when he translated Tirumangai-Aalvar's (8th century), Siriya Thirumadal (155 verses). The first ten verses of Thirumangai's poem Periya Tirumoli sing of his transformation, after receiving the spiritual knowledge from Lord Vishnu. Dr TNR was also transformed when he completed the translation of Siriya Thirumadal. In 1960 Dr TNR heard the spiritual discourses on Periyapuranam by Sukhabrahmam Ramaswami Sastrigal at Thanjavur. From that moment Periyapuranam became his Rig Veda and Sekkizhar became his Paramaguru. Then in 1961 Dr TNR came into contact with Triloka Sitaram. The final stage for the intellectual and spiritual transformation of Dr TNR as a scholar and as a man of letters was now fully set and complete.

Perhaps all that I can say is that even when he was only 27 years old, Dr TNR chose his life's mission with a clairvoyant vision, defining it in these words of fire to himself: 'To be able to work in the service of a great idea, on behalf of an important goal; to be able to commit every nerve, every muscle, and every drop of sweat to a work, to a great task; to grow with the work, to become greater oneself in the struggle with one's betters' and then to be able to say at the end: I die, but there remains something that is more important than my life and will last longer than my body: my work. That is my hope, which is worthy of tremendous efforts, that is my goal, for which it is worth living and, if need be, dying.'

Thus the solid foundation for Dr TNR's holistic intellectual and spiritual growth had been fully laid by 1961. Perhaps Seneca (c. 4 BC – AD 65) **the Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman and dramatist** had great men like Dr TNR in view when he wrote the famous words: *'The greatest man is he who chooses right with the most invincible resolution; who resists to sorest temptation from within and without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully; who is calmest in storms, and most fearless under menaces and frowns; whose reliance on truth, on virtue, and on God is most unfaltering and total.'*

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Felicitation Function for Sekkizhar Adippodi at THANJAVUR THATHUVA MAIYAM, Tamil University, Thanjavur and Sekkizhar Adippodi Dr TNR Saiva Samaya Arakattalai jointly organized a grand function to felicitate and honour Dr TNR on his 76th Birthday at Thanjavur on 12-13, September, 2009. On 12 September 2009 Thiruppanandal Adheenam His Holiness Muthu kumaraswamy Thambiran and Thiru M. Rajendran, ViceChancellor Tamil University Thanjavur offered their felicitations. Great scholars and men of letters like Professor K. G. Seshadri, Dr. Prema Nandakumar, Professor A. A. Manavazhan, Pulavar Thirunavukarasu, Professor Cheeni Viswanathan, Professor S.A. Shanakaranarayanan, Thiru V.S. Ramalingam and Thiru Subbarayulu reviewed different aspects, facets and dimensions of the vast and varied intellectual output of Dr. TNR and offered their personal tributes to Dr TNR.

Thiru Subbarayulu gave a lecture on Dr. TNR as a translator of Meikanda Shastrangal. Professor Rama Kausalya, Professor A. Dakshinamoorthy, Professor Kodavayil M. Balasubramaniam, Dr B. M. Sundaram, Professor M. S. Venkatachalam, and Thiru Velswamy participated in the felicitation function, touching upon the multi-faceted life and personality of Dr. TNR. Thiru CNN Ubaidullah, Minister for Commercial Taxes, released 6 new publications of Dr. TNR on the same day.

Dr TNR's greatness is a two-faced coin – and its reverse is his Himalayan humility. Great and good men like Dr TNR speak to us only so far as we have ears and souls to hear them; only so far as we have in us the roots, at least, of what which flowers out in them.

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25

A NEW LIGHTHOUSE OF RESEARCH ON ABHIRAMI ANDADHI

The temple (abode) of Lord Shiva at Thirukkadaiyur near Mayiladuthurai in Nagai District is a very famous Shiva Sthalam. The main deity is called Amritaghateshwarar. The Goddess is Abhirami. The Sthala Vriksham is Vilvam (Agele Marmelos). The Theertham goes by the name of Amrita Pushkarini.

FRONT COVER OF THE BOOK

The legend of Markandeya Rishi is inseparably associated with the divine benediction of Lord Amritaghateshwarar of Thirukkadaiyur. Lord Amritaghateshwarar vanquished YAMA, the

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Lord of Death in order to grant the blessing of immortality to Markandeya Rishi. It was also here that Abhirama Bhattar, one of the priests in this temple, composed his long and famous spiritual poem called ABHIRAMI ANDADHI dedicated to Goddess Abhirami of Thirukkadaiyur. Abhirama Bhattar is reported to have lived in the late 18th century. According to certain records he was the contemporary of Raja Serfojii of Thanjavur.

Recently I had the pleasure and privilege of reading an outstanding book of original research in Tamil relating to Abhirami Anandadhi of Abhirama Bhattar—titled **'Abhirami Andadhi Araichi'**— authored by Tmt. Devaki Muthiah. She hails from one of the most distinguished families of Tamilnadu which has rendered yeoman service to the cause of higher education, cultural socio-economic and industrial development of Tamilnadu during the last 90 years. This research work was originally presented to Madras University under the title 'Abhirami Andadhiyin Samaya Ilakkiya Koorugal' for the award of M.Phil. Degree by Tmt. Devaki Muthiah in October 1986. Translated into English, the name of this work would be *'Religious and Literary Dimensions and Overtones of Abhirami Andadhi'*. The same work of research has been presented in the form of a book under the title 'Abhirami Andadhi Araichi'. I have presented the front cover of this book above.

Abhirami Anandadhi, a lucid and moving poem by Abhirami Bhattar, is on the Goddess of Thirukadiyur. There are very few Tamil stotras, written in a later period that could equal this simple and sublime poem, more so because of its deep and subtle meanings, expressed in powerfully simple diction. Here the words of the great English poet and Nobel Laureate T.S.Eliot (1888-1965) are very relevant: 'Great literary masterpieces have yet another quality and that is simplicity. Great simplicity is only won by an intense moment or by years of devoted effort, or by both. It represents one of the most arduous conquests of the human spirit, the triumph of elemental feeling and thought over the natural sin of language.'

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TMT. DEVAKI MUTHIAH

I am deeply moved to note that **Tmt. Devaki Muthiah** was spiritually drawn towards **Abhirami Anandadhi** when she was mourning the death of her beloved mother in 1970. Tmt.Devaki Muthiah tells us: *"When I was emotionally shattered by the passing away of my dear mother, I was groping for succour and solace in an unchartered sea of great pain and sorrow. It will not be too much to say that it was Abhirami Anandadhi which enabled me to withstand the tragedy and cross the ocean of grief and gloom, showing me the light of inner peace and fortitude, through its gleaming and glowing verses."*

We can see from Tmt.Devaki Muthiah's introduction that Abhirami Andadhi has been very popular, not only among the people but also among many eminent poets. She tells us that it was the great Tamil Poet Kannadasan (1927-1981) who made Abhirami Andadhi very popular among the common masses of Tamil Nadu through his sensitive and brilliant commentary on this work. However a detailed literary analysis of this work from the modern academic point of view was not available and Tmt. Devaki Muthiah has fulfilled with great verve and distinction this long felt public need.

This beautiful and long poem of Abirama Bhattar is in Andadhi style. **'Andadhi'** is one among the 96 types/forms/ mores of ancient Minor Tamil Literature (siru ilakkiangal).

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The oldest known 'Andadhi' work in Tamil is 'ARPUTHA THIRUVANDADHI' by Karaikal Ammayar. Andadhi style was later adopted by *Gnana Sambandar, Sundaramurthi Nayanar, Manikavachakar, Nammalwar, Thrumoolar and others.* The main feature of this genre of Tamil poetry is that the last word of every verse becomes the first word of the immediately next succeeding verse. I am presenting below the first two verses and the 100th verse of Abhirami Andadhi in order to illustrate this feature of Andadhi style:

1 உதிக்கின்ற் செங்கதி ருச்சித் திலக முணர்வுடையோர்
மதிக்கின்ற மாணிக்க மாதுளம் போது மலர்க்கமலை
துதிக்கின்ற மின்கொடி மென்கடிக் குங்கும தோயமென்ன
விதிக்கின்ற மேனி யபிராமி யென்றன் விழித்துணையே.

2 துணையுந் தொழுந்தெய்வ மும்பெற்ற தாயுஞ் சுருதிகளின்
பணையுங் கொழுந்தும் பதிகொண்ட வேரும் பவிமலர்ப்பூங்
கணையுங் கருப்புச் சிலையுமென் பாசாங் குசமுங்கையில்
அணையுந் திரிபுர சுந்தரி யாவ தறிந்தனமே.

குழையத் தழுவிய கொன்றையந் தார்கமழ் கொங்கைவல்லி
கழையைப் பொருத திருநெடுந் தோளுங் கருப்புவில்லும்
விழையப் பொருதிறல் வேதுணையுந்மும் வெண்ணகையும்
உழையைப் பொருதகண்ணு நெஞ்சிலெப்போது முதிக்கின்றவே.100

We can see that the last word of the first verse (1) above is 'vizhithunaiye' (விழித்துணையே). The first word of the succeeding second verse (2) above is 'thunaiyun'(துணையுந்). The melodious chain between the last word of each verse and the first word of each succeeding verse is maintained in the manner of a beautiful garland throughout this song by Abirama Bhattar with consummate literary dexterity and spiritual devotion. We can see that the last word of the verse 100 above is 'Udhikkindrave' (உதிக்கின்றவே) and this is connected with the first word 'Udhikkindra' (உதிக்கின்ற) of the first word of the first verse(1) above. According to age-

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old cultural tradition in Tamilnadu, flowers last for a moment and vanish forever. A spiritual garland of aesthetic literary flowers like Abhirami Andadhi last forever. This aspect has been brought out graphically by Tmt.Devaki Muthiah.

Her research work of 'Abhirami Andadhi Araichi' deals with all the aspects - literary, cultural, social, ritualistic, mythological, religious and spiritual dimensions of Abhirami Andadhi. While this work of Abhirami Bhattar relates mainly to the realm of devotional literature, yet the author has systematically studied, analyzed and presented with great academic rigour and precision different aspects of his literary flourish, giving a comparison of his work with other master Tamil poets like Kamban, Sambandar, Manickavachakar and other later poets. There is also a valuable and historical analysis of ancient Tamil literature, from the time of Tholkappiyar. In my view the incisive and brilliant manner in which Tmt.Devaki Muthiah traces many aspects of Tamil literature to the time-defying literary and cultural influence of Tholkappiyar will prove to be of great and lasting value to all students of Tamil literature.

Tmt. Devaki Muthiah has devoted a whole chapter to the analysis of religious theories and concepts which sheds valuable data on Tamil poems in general and Abhirami Andadhi in particular. For example, she shows quite appropriately that the work of Abhirama Bhattar does not belong to Vama Sakta School and that it has to be viewed as a part of the compassionate and benign Saiva Siddhanta School. In another poem SHE is said to have been worshipped by Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva, showing HER superiority. The author's treatment of such concepts is really instructive, original and fascinating.

Socrates (469 BC–399 BC) called BEAUTY a short-lived tyranny; his student Plato (427 BC-347 BC), a privilege of nature; Theophrastus (371BC-287 BC), a silent cheat; Theocritus (3rd century BC), a delightful prejudice; Carneades (214 – 129 BC), a solitary kingdom; Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC), that it was better than all the letters of recommendation in the world; Homer

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(classic antiquity-850 BC), that it was a glorious gift of nature, and Ovid (43 BC-17 AD), that it was a favour bestowed by the Gods. Keats (1795-1821), the great English poet paid this tribute to beauty and truth:

Beauty is truth,
truth beauty - that is all
Ye know on earth,
and all ye need to know.

Tmt. Devaki Muthiah has to be congratulated for having brought out the imperishable and everlasting aesthetic beauty of many of the verses from Abhirami Anadadhi. On page 27 of her work, she cites the following verse to show how Goddess Abhirami is indeed omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient:

சித்தியும் சித்தி தரும்தெய்வம் ஆகித் திகழும்பரா
சத்தியும் சத்து தழைக்கும் சிவமும் தவமும்முயல்வார்
முத்தியும் முத்திக்கு வித்தும்வித் தாகி முளைத்தெழுந்த
புத்தியும் புத்தியி னுள்ளே புரக்கும் புரத்தையன்றோ

She cites the following verse on page 159 of her work to demonstrate how Abhirama Bhattar declares that Goddess Abhirami is the supreme authority for Creation, Preservation and Dissolution:

ஆத்தாளை யெங்க ளபிராம வல்லியை யண்டமெல்லாம்
பூத்தாளை மாதுளம் பூநிறத் தாளைப் புவிபடைக்கக்
காத்தாளை யங்கையிற் பாசாங் குசமுங் கரும்புவில்லும்
சேர்த்தாளை முக்கண்ணி யைத்தொழு வார்க்கொரு தீங்கில்லையே

The author cites the following verse on page 44 to show that the light of Goddess Abhirami is one though SHE is called by different names. Repetition of Her Holy Name is an infinitely powerful ally. As the mind fills with the thought of Goddess, the heart becomes pure. Anger gradually turns into compassion, greed into generosity, lust into love.

Soulless modern scientific academic approach—unfortunately—has persuaded us that to perceive reality as it

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நாயகி நான்முகி நாரா யணிகை நளினபஞ்ச
சாயகி சாம்பவி சங்கரி சாமளை சாதிநச்சு
வாய்அகி மாலினி வாராகி சூலினி மாதங்கி என்
றாயகி யாதி உடையாள் சரணம் அரண்நமக்கே[45]

பயிரவி பஞ்சமி பாசாங் குசைபஞ்ச பாணிவஞ்சர்
உயிர்அவி உண்ணும் உயர்சண்டி காளி ஒளிருங்கலா
வயிரவி மண்டலி மாலினி சூலி வராகி என்றே
செயிர்அவி நான்மறை சேர்திரு நாமங்கள் செப்புவதே[46]

is, our feelings must be eliminated. Our humanity is reduced by half—indeed, by much more than half—when feeling is eliminated from our quest for understanding. Our feelings help us to complete our humanity. They enable us to function better, even intellectually. Without feeling, what is the value in even the greatest intellectual discovery? What matter the vastness of the Universe or the intricacies of the atom to the coldly blindly staring indifference of a mechanical brain? Calm feeling, however, is the very essence of deep understanding. In fact calm, impersonal feeling is the essence of true discovery. *Calm feeling is intuition. And intuition is that feeling which appears when both the intellect and the emotions are lifted into a still, inner perception of the truth. Without intuition, profound insights are simply not possible.* Tmt.Devaki Muthiah's book is a great work, marked by calm, deep and intense feeling—**Divine Intuition——for Goddess Abhirami.**

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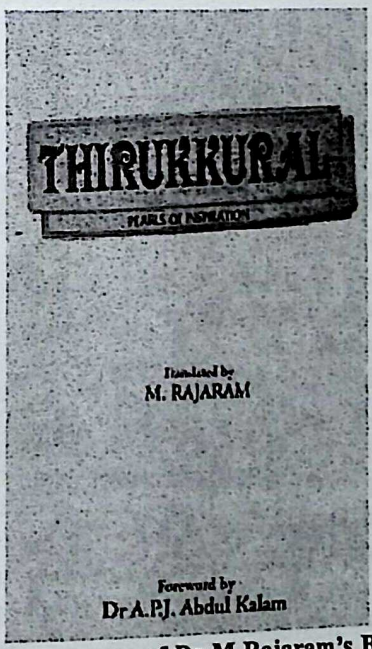
POETIC ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THIRUKKURAL

Recently I made one of my periodical visits to my favourite Higginbothams's book shop on Anna Salai, Chennai. I chanced to lay my hands on an extraordinary book titled 'THIRUKKURAL Pearls of Inspiration' by Dr M Rajaram, I.A.S., belonging to the Tamilnadu cadre.



Front cover page of Dr M Rajaram's Book

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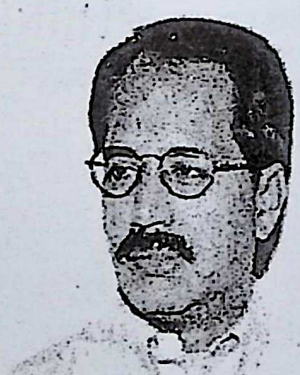
He has translated all the 1330 verses of Thirukkural into English. Published by Rupa and Co in New Delhi, it has a foreword by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, former President of India. In my view this is an outstanding work of translation of an ancient and difficult literary, ethical, moral, spiritual work like Thirukkural. Dr Abdul Kalam has paid a very well deserved tribute to Dr M. Rajaram who is an exceptional IAS officer.

Dr M. Rajaram hails from Pudur near Vilathikulam, in Thoothukudi District, quite near Ettyapuram which is the birth place of Mahakavi Bharathiar. He has taken a Post Graduate Degree in English Literature and Education. Besides he is also a Law Graduate with a BL Degree. In addition he holds a Doctorate Degree. He served in the Education Department with rare distinction for nearly two decades in various important and responsible capacities. He is a great research scholar in the field of education and his research papers have received much acclaim at the National level. His earlier books on education titled 'Changing Faces of School Inspection, Towards Quality in Educational Administration and Who Will Bell the Cat' have been greatly appreciated by educationists and educational administrators of National and International fame.

I know a few important people in the field of education who have interacted closely with Dr M. Rajaram. I understand that Dr M. Rajaram has the most balanced and appropriate views on true education. I believe his educational philosophy can be summed up in these words: 'Don't fall into the vulgar idea that mind is a warehouse, and education but a process of stuffing it full of goods. The aim of education should be to convert the mind into a living fountain and not a



Dr M Rajaram

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reservoir.' I know that Dr Rajaram studied in St John's College in Thirunelveli at a time when I was the District Collector and Magistrate of the unbifurcated larger Thirunelveli District in 1976 -78. The beautiful words of Rev. E. H Chapin (1814-1880) are wholly applicable to Dr M. Rajaram: "Do not ask if a man has been through college; ask if a college has been through him — if he is a walking University."

Amidst his never ending and busy official preoccupations, Dr Rajaram has found it possible to produce this beautiful work of English translation of Thirukkural into Tamil. One of the least recognized glories of British Raj in India relates to the fact that many outstanding Civil Servants and ICS Officers of that time, notwithstanding the heavy pressure of work found it possible to engage in literary pursuits or to combine with their official duties scholarly researches into *Indian History, Philology, Religions, Ethnology, Numismatics, Archaeology, Ornithology, Economics etc.* Some of them specialised on a particular subject, but others had a larger circle of interests, such as Sir William Hunter KCSI, CIE (1840-1900), whose writings were distinguished by their variety and literary grace. This great tradition of scholar-civil servants was given a death blow after our independence by our political parties. Dr Rajaram legitimately belongs to this scholar-civil servant tradition.

Thirukkural (also known as the Kural) is a classic of couplets or Kurals (1330 rhyming Tamil couplets) or aphorisms celebrated not only by the Tamil people but all mankind. It was authored by the ancient Tamil Saint Thiruvalluvar, and is considered to be one of the first literary works to focus on ethics, in Shramana literature of India. However it begins with salutation to Adi Bhagwan. Thirukkural expounds various aspects of life and is one of the most important works in Tamil. This is reflected in some of the other names by which the text is known: **Tamilmarai** (Tamil Veda); poyyamozhi (speech that does not become false); and teyva nul or dheiva nool (divine text). It is dated anywhere from the second century BC to the eighth century AD. The book is considered to be a posterior to Arthashastra by some historians

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and to precede Manimekalai and Silapathikaram since both the latter acknowledge the Kural text. Thirukkural is and remains to be the book that has been translated into the most number of languages and hence it is called as "Ulaga Podhu Marai".

Saint Thiruvalluvar

Thirukkural is a collection of 1330 Tamil couplets organised into 133 chapters. Each chapter has a specific subject ranging from "ploughing a piece of land" to "ruling a country". The Tamil word Kural means Venpa verse with two lines. Thirukkural comes under one of the four categories of Venpas (Tamil verses) called Kural Venpa. The 1330 couplets are divided into 3 sections and 133 chapters. Each chapter contains 10 couplets. A couplet consists of seven cirs, with four cirs in the first line and three in the second. A cir is a single or a combination of more than one Tamil word. For example, Thirukkural is a cir formed by combining the two words Thiru and Kural, i.e. Thiru + Kural = Thirukkural.

Thirukkural has been translated into all the major languages of the world. In ENGLISH Rev. G. U. Pope's translation is very widely known. There are many others who translated the Thirukkural completely and some parts of it. Amongst them are Kinderslaey, F.W. Ellis, W.H. Drew, C.E Gover, E.G Robinson,

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Rev. G. Lazarus, T.M Scott and H.A Popley. Thirukkural has been translated into Latin by Fr. Beschie and Dr Grawl. A. F Gammers and Friedrich Ruckert have translated it into German. Prominent among the translators in French are E. Ariel, P.G Dumast and Louis Jacolliot.

Yeoman service has been done in this respect in Tamil Nadu by illustrious people like Sri V.V.S Iyer, Rajaji, K.M Balasubramaniam, K. Srinivasan, Ki.Va Jagannathan and many others. This work of English translation of Thirukkural by Dr Rajaram belongs to this genre. Translations of Thirukkural have also come out in other languages like Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Oriya.

600 years ago, **commentaries** were written on Thirukkural by 10 wise and learned scholars like Dharumar, Manakkudavar, Dhaamathar, Nacchar, Thirumalaiar, Mallar, Paaripperumal, Kalingar, Parithiar and Parimelazhagar. There is no doubt that Parimelazhagar's commentary surpasses those of the 9 others who preceded him. During the 19th Century, more than a hundred came forward to bring out commentaries and research works on Thirukkural.

In his introduction, Dr Rajaram has rightly observed: 'Thirukkural as a book that deals with the art of living is gaining increasing acceptance. It transcends national boundaries, historical, social limitations and language barriers. It makes great sense and relevance even today and for all times. Among the ethical works in Indian languages, Thirukkural stands supreme. Thirukkural was written 2000 years ago. It was more truly presented in a language that was in vogue at that time.

Thiruvalluvar, who brought out 'Thirukkural', the book for all ages, was an eminent and exceptional scholar endowed with divine quality. He was not only a sage with a humane heart but also a psychologist with a deep insight into the complexities of human nature and a philosopher with an urge to reform.'

No wonder Mahakavi Bharatiyar has rightly observed for all time 'Tamilnadu gave unto the world Valluvar and thereby won

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great renown'. In my view the following verse is totally applicable to the Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar:

"One page of Thiruvalluvar can
Teach us more of man
Than all the sages can".

The Thirukkural is divided into three sections. They are (in this order):

- அறத்துப்பால் (VIRTUE)
- பொருட்பால் (WEALTH)
- காமத்துப்பால்(LOVE)

I am presenting below one sample page relating to the GLORY OF GOD from Dr Rajaram's book under review.

For the benefit of our discerning readers I am also presenting below a magnificent summary in Tamil of Thirukkural by a great Tamil Scholar, Madurai Ki Palaniappan: In my view, this master frame work prepared by Madurai Ki Palaniappan will serve as a permanent guide to all scholars of Tamil literature in the future:

Literature has been defined as good writing which has a truth to tell about people and their world, and tells truth in a way which compels the sensitive reader to re-live the writer's experience with his own mind and emotions. It grows out of experience and response, and conveys both. It does so through native talent, and acquired skill, working with content, form and style, to create tone. It has no borders or boundaries. Language, religion, country, theme, manner or even time, cannot confine it. It is ageless, timeless, measureless and universal. Literature has form and feature, expression and suggestion, smiles and laughter, tears and lamentations, anger and pleasure, love and hate, hopes as well as disappointments. It may be simple or complex, easy or difficult. It may explain or perplex, hide or reveal. It may spring from innocence, or from experience. It has an endless variety of moods and modes. Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural is a great work of world literature in this sense.

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பாயிரம் - Introduction
1. கடவுள் வாழ்த்து
GLORY OF GOD

1 அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு.
'A' is the beginning of all alphabets
God is the origin of the universe.
'A' is the first of all letters Likewise, God is the beginning of all the worlds.

2 கற்றதனா லாய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்
நற்றாள் தொழாஅர் எனின்.
Of what use is learning if it fails to lead
To the holy feet of all-knowing God?
Learning is of no use if the learner does not submit himself to God.

3 மலர்மிசை ஏகினான் மாணடி சேர்ந்தார்
நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்.
Who clasp the feet of God in flowery mind
Live long in this earthly abode.
Those who submit themselves to the sacred feet of God live long in this world.

4 வேண்டுதல்வேண் டாமை இலான்அடி சேர்ந்தார்க்கு
யாண்டும் இடும்பை இல.
No misery falls on those who hold
The feet of the unbiased God.
No sufferings come to those who hold the feet of God, who is above likes and dislikes.

5 இருள்சேர் இருவினையும் சேரா இறைவன்
பொருள்சேர் புகழ்புரிந்தார் மாட்டு.
Twin deeds of dark illusion, good and bad,
Won't be theirs who glorify God.
Those who praise the glory of God have no confusion about right and wrong deeds.

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Dr. Rajaram is a distinguished man of letters and literature. This beautiful work of English translation of Thirukkural by Dr Rajaram is marked by a rare literary flavour and poetic sensibility. His translation gives a cubic content to the famous observation of the great American poet Robert Frost who wrote that great poetry is nothing but a beautiful marriage of sound and sense. Dr Rajaram has achieved this sublime effect in his following lines of English translation of some of the verses of Thirukkural:

"Smile, charity, pleasant words and civility
These four are marks of true nobility.
Dig deeper the sand-well, more water flows,
Read deeper, more wisdom grows."

The dynamics of Thirukkural has been richly complimented by various scholars from all parts of the world. Dr Albert Schweitzer says: 'There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of Maxims in which we find so much of wisdom.' Mahatma Gandhi calls it: 'A textbook of indispensible authority on moral life. The maxims of Valluvar have touched my soul. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him.'

Mahatma Gandhi has said that he came to know about Thirukkural from Leo Tolstoy. Leo Tolstoy has openly admitted that he has taken the concept of non-violence from a German translation of the Kural. Sri Aurobindo has said: ***'Thirukkural is gnomic poetry, the greatest in planned consumption and force of execution ever written in this kind.'*** Rajaji says: ***'It is a Gospel of Love and a Code of Soul-Luminous life.*** The whole of human aspiration is epitomized in this immortal book, a book for all ages.' K. M. Munshi, the founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and a great man of letters has said: ***'Thirukkural is a treatise par excellance on the art of living.'***

Thiruvalluvar is a national poet of the Tamils and he is the greatest pride and possession of the Tamil people. According to Thiruvachakamani K. M. Balasubramaniam, Thiruvalluvar's

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Photo caption: Dr Abdul Kalam receiving a copy of Dr M Rajaram's book of Thirukkural English translation at a function at New Delhi on 13-May-2009. Dr Rajaram is on the right of Dr Abdul Kalam.

Thirukkural and Manickavachagar's Thiruvachakam are supposed to be the body and soul respectively of the Blessed Mother Tamil. Thirukkural builds up the character and conduct of human beings. Thiruvachakam feeds their souls on its felicitous food of Divine Ambrosia and prepares them for their Eternal Beatitude.

Thirukkural develops the intellect and brain and makes men live a life of honour, dignity and honesty. By adopting Thirukkural as a manual of daily living, any one can have his mind and body in the best of form. It is not therefore surprising that the great scholar Ariel paid this tribute to Thirukkural: 'The Kural is the masterpiece of Tamil Literature, one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought. That which above all is wonderful in Kural is the fact that its author addresses himself without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind, the fact that he formulates sovereign morality and, absolute reason, that he proclaims in their very essence, in their eternal abstractedness, virtue and Truth, that he presents as it were in one group, the highest laws of domestic & social life.'

In my view, Dr M. Rajaram's work of English translation of Thirukkural is a truly a work of art by itself. A bad work

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of translation only transmits information. Judicial fidelity and transfixing freedom are the qualities characterising Dr Rajaram's work of translation. A sublime work of translation like that of Dr Rajaram succeeds in performing a divine transmitting function. He succeeds in transmitting the unfathomable, the mysterious and the 'poetic' everlasting ancient wisdom of Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural.

Dr Rajaram's English verse translation of 1330 verses of Thirukkural is marked by great fidelity to the letter and spirit of the original. It can easily be proved that Thiruvalluvar and Shakespeare are intellectual companions of equal merit and mettle. This is the view of Thiruvachakamani K.M. Balasubramaniam. Thiruvachakamani also translated Thirukkural into English verse. Let me give a few instances to illustrate this point of literaterary parity between Thiruvalluvar and Shakespeare.

In Verse 1091 of Thirukkural, Valluvar speaks of a maid's two eyes one of which he says causes pain in the onlooker, namely the pain of love. This verse No: 1091 of Thirukkural has been translated by Dr Rajaram as follows:

110. குறிப்பறிதல்
DIVINING THE HEART

Hero speaks to himself:

1091 இருநோக்கு இவ்உள்ளல் உள்ளது ஒருநோக்கு
நோய்நோக்குஒன்று அந்நோய் மருந்து.
Her painted eyes possess twofold looks
One harms while the other treats.
Her painted eyes have two different looks; one injures
the other heals.

The same verse 1091 has been translated by Thiruvachakamani K.M. Balasubramaniam as follows: 'One look doth cause the pain for which the other's a balm so nice'.

We can see the parallel from Shakespeare for this verse 1091. To quote the words of Shakespeare: 'What an eye, she has! Me thinks it seems a parley of provocation'. Dr Rajaram has translated verse No: 1099 of Thirukkural as follows:

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Confidante speaks to herself:

1099 எதிரா பேசல் பொதுநோக்கு நோக்குதல்
காதலர் கண்ணே புள.

Looking at each other as strangers
Belongs only to lovers.
They look at each other as strangers. but really they are
lovers. Such practice is found only among lovers.

Thiruvachakamani K M Balasubramaniam has translated the same verse 1099 above as follows:

'When one's own eyes would meet her eyes
Communicative way,
The words of mouth will not at all have
aught of use or say!'

Shakespeare sings (the message of verse 1099 above): 'Sometimes from her eyes I did receive fair speechless messages'. Is not this brevity the real soul of wit?

The most beautiful summary of Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural was made by Va Subbiah Pillai, one of the stalwarts of the Thirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Kazhagam. I am presenting below his poetic summary:

குறள் முச்சீர் மணிகள்

[வ. சுப்பையா பிள்ளை]

அடக்கம் அமரருள் உய்க்கும்
அருட்செல்வம் செல்வத்துட் செல்வம்
அருவினைக்கு அவ்வுயிர் நிற்கே
அலவறிந்து ஆராய்ந்து சோர்வு
அழுக்கொண்ட எல்லாம் அழுபோல்
அதத்தால் வருவதே இன்பம்
அறன்வரம் பட்டதே இல்வாழ்க்கை
அறிவுடையார் எல்லாம் உடையார்
அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை
ஆகுலம் தோன்றும் அனிச்சம்
இடுக்கண் வினைதரும் நட்பு
இறல்ஈன வரும்கால் நாண
இன்சொல் எவர்க்கும் எளிதாம்
இனியொன்று கேளை செய்தக்க
உடையார் என்படுவது ஊக்கம்
உள்ளுவது வேண்டும் புலவன்
உறுவதொன்று எண்ணலை வேண்டும்
உறுவர் உலகத்தார்க்கு ஆணி
உவகை விளைவை உயிர்க்கு

உள்ளம் உடைமை உடைமை
எண்ணித் துணிதல் பரிந்து
ஒற்றாடல் ஒற்றுஞ் இல்லை
என்னிற் அளிசெய் என்னோடு
என்னுடைய என்பவர் கற்றிலர்
கேள்வியுட் செல்வம் மலி
கருத்தறிவு வேண்டும் உபாவு
செப்பொருள் என்பது அறிவு
சொற்றூய் சொல்லிற் பயனுடை
தன்நெஞ்ச அறிவது பொய்யற்ற
தன்நிகர் மித்தரும் தன்னெழுக்க
தெரிதல் உளதெனல் இன்னிசை
பண்புடையார்ப் பட்டுண்டு உலகம்
பரியுமாம் என்றும் பெருமை
பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும்
பெருக்கத்து வேண்டும் பணிதல்
மக்கள் மெய்போல் உடற்கிளையும்
மறிபார்க்கொன்று கலிதான மன
வேண்டுங்கால் வேண்டும் வினைமை

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குறள் நாற்சீர் மணிகள்

[மகாமகோபாத்தியாய உ.வே. சாமிநாதையர்]

அகத்தாற் றோற்ற மறிந் தறம்
அடங்கலை ஆய்ந்து மடித்து
மறைவாய் ஆய்ந்தும் ஐயுற்ற பொருட்
குறுகேடித்து அல்லல் உழன்றுஞ் சூழ
அறிவாகா மற்புக் உலகி மிராது
ஆதி பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு
ஆதற் றலைநின் றன்ன வே
நிலமே முதல்வன் நிலைமை உலகு
நிலத்தே யாகாயம் வந்த நீடு
உலகிற்குள் தம்மோ டுறழ் தகுத்
உயர் வெய்தப்பா சமிலே யாத்து
உயர்ந்த பொருளை யாவர் யார்க்கு
உரைத்த பொருளை யுரைப்பு
முதலை புரைக்குள் சமந்த இன்பு
முயலல் உயிரும் முயல் பதிப்
முறிந்து முருகு நெய்சார் தட்பு
வித்தின் நீர்த் தாதற்றுத் தா
வாதனை தன்னு அறிவாகா தாது
வானவர் தம்மோ டொன்றுஞ் சோம்

நிறைந்தும் நிலையா நிறை மலர்
யோரும் வேண்டி யெழிலாரு மோம்
சோலைத் தேனிற் பெருகி யுலகு புகை
சான்றோர்க்குச் சோனை விலக்கே விலக்கு
சான்றோர் பயனே சொல்லாமை நன்று
நிறைவு சொலாமை யென்னை தான்
நிறைக்கும் பூதநீர் கூற் றிறுத்
நிறைய மதியெது சிறிதுந் தரு
சொற்ற சொல்லாமை யாறு கேற்ற
பெய்தது சுவர்ப்பே பழுத்து விளை
சென்னை சமயாரு பெய்ய நிலம்
சொன்ன சொல்லி யவர்வாய் சோர
மாத்தன்மை வற்றுள் தாழ்ந் தறிவு
முயற்சியிற் புன்னுடையர் கல்வ தவ
முயற்சித்து றோலை முயலும் விரித்து
நுணுக்கத் தேவற்றுக் கூடி தரும்
வன்மையுள் வன்மை யடலாம் பொரு
மிகுதல் வேண்டி மன்னர் தகுத்
சேர்ந்தமை யென்றுங் பிறன்வி னோதல்

The great Tamil Scholar and savant Mahamahopadhyaya U.V. Swaminatha Iyer(1855-1941) in his 'Thiruvalluvarum Thirukkuralum' summed up the glory and grandeur of Thirukkural as follows:

தேவர் குறள்

தமிழ் அன்னைக்கு நிறத்தை வென்று சில அலங்காரத் தோற்றத்தைத் தொகுத்துச் சில சில செய்யுட்களின் வாயிலாகத் தெரிவித்திருப்பர்.

முதல் ஒன்று

"தேவர் குறளும் திருநான் மறைமுடிவும்
மூவர் தமிழும் முனிமொழியும்—யோவை
திருவா சகமுந் திருமூல சோகமும்
ஒருவா சகமென் றுணர்."

ஆறில் ஒன்று

"வள்ளுவச்சி வள்ளொழி வாசகத்தெள் ளாரிசையே
தெள்ளுபரி மேலாகச் செய்தவரை—முள்ளிலாச்
சொல்லாட் புலவர்த் தொகுத்தி யோரறமும்
கல்லாடிற்கு மேலாந் தரம்."

எண்ணில் ஒன்று

"திருக்கக் மாமுனிவர் தாமனி யம்பர்
விருத்தக் கவிதிறமும் வேண்டேன்—உருத்தக்க
கொள்ளுவேன் யாக்கைதனைக் கூறேல் குறளருமை
எய்தெனேன் றுணி நெஞ்சு."

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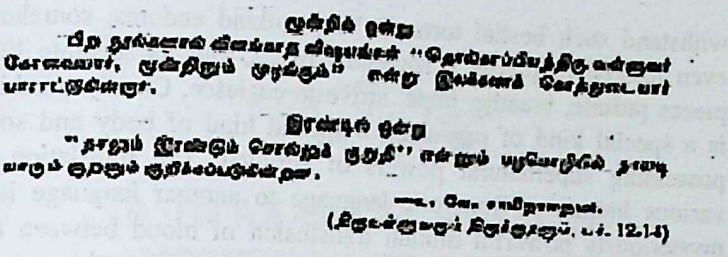

As a literary genre, translation has a mode of its own. Therefore the task of the translator is quite distinct and different from that of the poet. The main task of the translator consists in finding out that intended effect (Intention) upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it THE ECHO OF THE ORIGINAL. This is the cardinal feature of any soulful translation which basically differentiates it from the poet's work. Having read Dr Rajaram's work of translation, I can say with certainty that his English verses succeed in broadcasting the ECHO OF THE ORIGINAL THIRUKKURAL.

In my view, a good work of translation ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages. It cannot possibly reveal or establish this hidden relationship itself; but it can represent it by realizing it in embryonic or intensive form. There is no doubt whatsoever that there exists a central kinship of languages, marked by a distinctive convergence. Languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express. Dr Rajaram's work achieves this effect of showing that English and ancient Tamil are not enemies of each other; indeed they have a substantive and substantial fraternal relationship.

In this context, I cannot help quoting the beautiful words of Yevgeny Yevtushenko, the great Russian poet: 'Mankind is essentially a single organism, a single body, a single soul. But can we imagine a body surviving if it were hacked into little pieces (even if in these little pieces artificial dams were to be constructed, for normal blood circulation)? Would any body

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withstand such bestial torture? Yet mankind endures, somehow; even hacked to pieces it somehow exists, and its separate little pieces pulsate, breathe, hope, strive to coalesce. Clearly mankind is a special kind of organism, a special kind of body and soul, possessing supernatural powers of survival. The translation of various literatures from one language to another language is a mysteriously powerful mutual transfusion of blood between the sliced-up pieces of the single body of mankind. Were this not so, mankind would not survive.'

Dr M. Rajaram has rightly dedicated this book to World Peace. I have no doubt whatsoever that Dr M Rajaram's English translation of Thirukurral will promote the larger cause of international peace and goodwill in this decadent age riven by all kinds of malice, prejudice and hatred — in short, proving Yevgeny Yevtushenko absolutely right.

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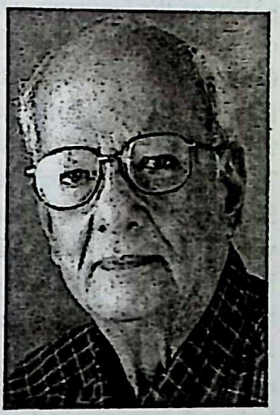
27

A TITAN IN THE WORLD OF MODERN TAMIL LETTERS

A STUDENT'S TRIBUTE

The 80th Birthday of the inter nationally acclaimed Tamil novelist and writer was celebrated on 10th July 2010. Earlier this year, Indira Parthasarathy was honoured with the title of Padma Sri by the President of India on the Republic Day on 26 January, 2010. I had the rare privilege and good fortune of learning Tamil at the feet of Indira Parthasarathy between 1955 and 1958 in the Madrasi Higher Secondary School in New Delhi where he was working as a Tamil teacher. I had just completed 16 years in 1958. As my Tamil teacher, he gave me a feel for world literature, which has lasted for a life-time. He often taught by his example. His mastery over Tamil, English and indeed world literature was very evident in the classroom. His intellectual and cultural influence upon me and many other students have lasted for a lifetime. I offer my reverential salutations to Indira Parthasarathy on the happy occasion of his 80th birthday.



Indira Parthasarathy

As an outstanding novelist, he has written several novels in TAMIL that have been translated into several Indian and world languages. He has carved a special niche for himself in Tamil literature --- his characters, mostly urban intellectuals, speak very

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openly and analyze deeply what others say. Most of his novels are set in Delhi, where he lived during his working years, from 1955 to 1986 or in Tiruchirappally or Thanjavur District in Tamil Nadu, where he spent his childhood. He has won several awards including the Sangeeth Natak Academy, Sahitya Academy and Saraswathi Samman Award. He is the only Tamil writer to have won both the Sangeeth Natak and Sahitya Academy Award. He won the Sahitya Academy Award as early as 1970.

Against this background, I cannot help observing that the title of Padma Sri has come to Indira Parthasarathy rather late in his life. Too little and too late has been the main plank of the policy of the Government of India in the field of State recognition of outstanding merit in the field of Tamil literature. Even all the Gods do not know the standards followed by the Government of India for the determination and gradation of excellence in different fields of creative endeavour. Indira Parthasarathy is the second Tamil writer who has been honoured with the title of Padma Sri. Shri Jayakanthan, another equally outstanding and original Tamil writer, was the first Tamil writer to be decorated with the title of Padma Sri last year. In my view, the Government of India ought to have conferred upon both of them the Award of Padma Vibhushan for their original, rich, magnificent and varied contribution to modern Tamil Literature. The tragedy—and also the comedy—of Indian democracy is that carpenters would be treated as violinists and vice versa with stately aplomb by the Government of India in the matter of grant of Padma Awards.

Indira Parthasarathy (commonly known as **Ee. Paa.**) is the PEN NAME of R. Parthasarathy (the first name being his wife's which he uses as his pseudonym) He was born on July 10, 1930 in Chennai in a traditional Iyengar family and brought up in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. After his graduate and post graduate studies at the Annamalai University he did doctoral work in the University of Delhi and obtained his Ph.D. degree on 'Vaishnavism In Tamil Between Seventh And Ninth Centuries'.

Henry Adams in his famous book The Education of Henry Adams wrote on behalf of teachers like Indira Parthasarathy: "A

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teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Goethe had teachers like Indira Parthasarathy in mind when he said: "A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one single good action, for one single good poem, accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows and rows of natural objects, classified with name and form". Virginia Woolf in her explosive book A Room of One's Own (1929) rightly declared: "The first duty of a lecturer—to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your note-books and keep on the mantelpiece for ever". Indira Parthasarathy gave me countless nuggets of truth for three years in the school classroom from 1955 to 1958 which were the most impressionable years of my life.

Later, when I joined the Dayal Singh College in Delhi University as a lecturer in Economics in 1963, Indira Parthasarathy became my colleague as lecturer in Tamil in the same college. We parted company when I joined the Indian Administrative Service (1965) and moved to Madras. Notwithstanding this I have been in close personal touch with him and his family for nearly half a century.

I have always drawn my inspiration from the soaring words of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) who painted the relationship between the GURU and his SISHYA in radiant words of everlasting beauty and wisdom: "*The GURU must be worshiped as GOD. He is God, nothing less than that. The GURU is the bright mask which God wears in order to come to us. As we look steadily on, gradually the mask falls off and God is revealed. He is the embodiment of the Bliss Divine., the personification of the highest knowledge and the giver of the greatest beatitude, who is pure, perfect, one without a second, eternal beyond pleasure and pain, beyond all thought and all qualifications, transcendental. Such is in reality the Guru. No wonder the disciple looks upon him as God himself and trusts him, reveres him, obeys him, follows him unquestioningly. This is the relation between the Guru and the disciple*". I have always looked upon my Guru Indira Parthasarathy in this light.

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As an academician in the world of Tamil letters, Indira Parthasarathy had a distinguished career in Delhi University for nearly 25 years from 1963 and later in the Central Pondicherry University. When Pondicherry University was started in 1985, he organised the School Of Performing Arts and was the Director for Culture in the same University until he retired. He was visiting professor of Tamil Language and Literature from 1981 to 1986 in Warsaw University, Poland, and devised specialised courses for teaching Tamil for the non-Tamils and foreigners. He was a visiting Fellow to various Canadian Universities and gave lectures on Indian philosophy and culture during 1984. He was also a visiting lecturer on Indian Literature at Institute Voortalen, Utrecht, Holland.

As a creative writer, he has carved a niche for himself in Tamil fiction. He has published 16 novels, 4 anthologies in novelettes, 6 anthologies of short stories and eight modern Tamil plays. He won the Sahitya Academy Award for his novel Kurudhi Punal (The River of Blood) in 1977. It focuses on the savage burning of Dalit farm labourers. The novel is outstanding in its realistic portrayal of the rural scenario with all its petty rivalries, casteism and vested interests.

Indira Parthasarathy is one of the brilliant writers of modern fiction in Tamil. Unconventional in approach, his works deal with different aspects of social existence. I have met people from different cultural backgrounds from different parts of India and the world who have told me about Indira Parthasarathy's pervasive cultural influence upon their psyche and consciousness. The value of great fiction is not that it entertains us or distracts us from our troubles not just that it broadens our knowledge of people and places but also that it helps us to know what we believe in, reinforces the qualities that are noblest in us and leads us to feel uneasy about our failures and limitations.

Literature is the only human activity that makes the fullest and most precise account of the variousness, possibility, complexity, beauty, banality, bestiality, agony, ecstasy and difficulty of human

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existence. A writer's problem does not change. He himself changes and the world he lives in (and observes) changes, but his problem remains the same. It is always how to write truly and having found out what is true, to portray and project it in such a way that it becomes a part of the experience of the person who reads it.

Viewed in this light Indira Parthasarathy has evolved, changed and grown in his own way during the last 50 years. Great literature is an answer to the questions that society asks about itself but this answer is almost always unexpected. The special feature of Indira Parthasarathy's creative writing lies in his ability to give unexpected answers to many well known questions. Through his great writings he has consistently shown that literature is not mere juggling of words, what matters is what is left unsaid, or what may be read between the lines.

Some of Indira Parthasarathy's novels are:

Kuruthi Punal (Sahitya Academy Award winning novel)
Akaya Thamarai Helicoptergal Keezhe Irangi Vittana
Mayaman Vettai
Theevukal
Yesuvin Thozharga
Krishna Krishna

What is most significant is that Indira Parthasarathy is primarily a theatre-man. He has published eight plays so far: Pasi (Hunger), Mazhai(Rain), Kala lyandirangal (Time Machines), Nandan Kathai (Story of Nandan), Koil (Temple), Porvai Porthiya Udalgal (People with Hidden selves), Aurangazeb and Ramanujar. Some of his earlier dramas were written under the influence of the Absurd Theatre. He got Saraswathi Samman Award for his Ramanujar in the year 2000.

Most of his plays have been translated into English and Hindi. His novelette **Ucchi Veyyil** (The Noon Sunshine) has been filmed by director K. Sethumadavan as Marupakkam, which won the President of India Gold Medal in 1991 as the best feature film. He was the honorary editor of the monthly literary journal

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Kanaiyazhi and contributed a number of critical essays on modern Tamil literature.

There are two distinct schools of drama — the idealistic and the realistic, the classic and the romantic. It is the object of the ideal and classic school to ennoble and elevate reality upon the stage. It curbs the wilder outbursts of passion; it eliminates the vulgar and the commonplace; it raises life into a serene and lofty region, from which all low, crude, vulgar and unlovely elements are carefully excluded. On the other hand, the natural and romantic school 'holds the mirror up to nature'. It is satisfied with things as they are. It does not select the beautiful and eliminate the 'unbeautiful'; it does not fasten on the noble and repudiate the base, but presents both as they are manifested or seen in real life. The discerning student of the drama, at his best, may indeed have a natural preference for one school over the other. I hold that the cultured and appreciative mind will have adequate room for both, and generally recognise the distinctive merits of both. As an avant-garde playwright in Tamil literature, Dr. Indira Prathasarathy belongs to the second category. In my view, he is a conscience-keeper and book-keeper of modern Tamil dramatic art. No one can question his position as a pioneer in the drama of social problems. His plays go straight to the basic questions of human conscience. He has disturbed the accepted concepts of conduct, proposed new moral values, and in his dramas of disaster and defeat, suggested the imperative need as well as the inevitable triumph of truth.

When Dr. Indira Prathasarathy was interviewed some years ago and asked to comment on the early years of his entry into the field of creative Tamil writing, and what makes him write and what are his own favourites, amongst his creations, he replied: "My writing is a reflection of my responses to a specific event. The expression of some responses may turn out better than others, in retrospect. But all of them have sincerity, because they are my true, genuine reactions at that particular moment when I write. So it will be hard for me to pick a favorite among my own works.

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"I wrote my very first story "manidha iyandhiram" in 1962/63. This and the next five stories were published by 'Anandha Vikatan' as "muthirai kadhaigal". This was the same time period when Writer Jayakanthan's short stories also appeared in 'Anandha Vikatan' as "muthirai kadhaigal". This gave me a lot of confidence in my ability to write, and I knew then I was going to be a writer. "Thandhira Bhoomi", which appeared in Na. Parthasarathy's 'Dheepam' magazine, earned me the credentials as a serious writer. "Kurudhippunal" and "Sudhandhira Bhoomi" both appeared as serials in 'Kanaiyazhi', and "Vendhu Thanindha Kadugall" in Kalki. The very first novel I wrote was "Kalavellam". It was written during my student days but got published much later. It is a romance novel..very different from the rest of my works."

This is how Dr Indira Pa.thasarathy talks about his years in New Delhi. "I loved my years in Delhi. At that time 'Kanaiyazhi' magazine was run from Delhi; possibly the first time a Thamizh magazine was run from outside Thamizh Nadu. 'Kanaiyazhi' was owned & edited by Mr. Kasturirangan who was also a correspondent for 'The New York Times' at that time. Thi. Janakiraman, who was also my school teacher, and I had a second connection through that magazine. Writers Ka. Naa. Subramaniam, Athavan, Sujatha and Vaasanthi were in Delhi too, besides Thi. Janakiraman. We all used to get together and have literary discussions every month. I am very happy to have been part of it. At that time I had a distant outsider's view of Chennai, and everything seemed fine. Once I was in Chennai itself, I felt a small degree of alienation; there is definitely less creative freedom in the Chennai environment. There seems to be a hierarchical system which is non-existent in Delhi. Even though 'suyamariyaadhai iyakkam' started in Thamizh Nadu, human dignity seems to have less of a premium in Thamizh Nadu. I think it is basically because of an intrinsic, rigid caste system that existed in the Thamizh society, which the British were able to exploit by dividing the people broadly into Brahmins and non-

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Brahmins. In the North, the British reinforced the Hindu-Muslim division...all for their own purposes, very clever of them!"

The real glory of Indira Parthasarathy's style of Tamil writing lies in its artless simplicity. Whenever I read his writings, I get braced by the breath of invigorating fresh air. In this context the sublime and timeless words of Walt Whitman (1819-1891) are absolutely relevant: "The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity: nothing is better than simplicity."

When a literary correspondent asked Indira Parthasarathy to comment on his simple style of Tamil writing, he gave this answer: "I believe that when you are sharing your thoughts with people, your goal should be to communicate. As I told you earlier, because of Tamil's antiquity, the pundit style is to revel in old and archaic language, absolutely they were not bothered about the readers, who are going to be the readers. I was not bothered by it, because my only goal was to communicate. Writing, like theatre, is a social institution. When a kite is flying, you see, it needs an opposition of air to fly. Likewise, I need a reader with whom I want to communicate. That is why, when I write, I am very conscious of the fact that I must write as simple as possible, but not in a simplistic way". Basically, it is very difficult to adopt a simple style. It is not so easy. When you see a very well-trained musician play an intricate taal, it comes so easy and effortlessly. You would think it is spontaneous. But there would have been a lot of hard work already done, and he would have worked it out in his mind. Same way, you work out a simple style in your mind, constantly thinking of it. I would say that a simple style has its own complexities.

I am only inspired to quote what that great American jurist and shaper of American Law, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841-1935), had to say about 'The Secret Isolated Joy Of The Thinker':

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'No man has earned the right to intellectual ambition until he has learned to lay his course by a star which he has never seen—to dig by the divining rod for springs which he may never reach. In saying this, I point to that which will make your study heroic. For I say unto you in all sadness of conviction, that to think great thoughts you must be heroes as well as idealists. Only when you have worked alone—when you have felt around you a black gulf of solitude more isolating than that which surrounds the dying man, and in hope and in despair have trusted to your own unshaken will,—then only can you gain the secret isolated joy of the thinker, who knows that, a hundred years after he is dead and forgotten, men who had never heard of him will be moving to the measure of his thought,—the subtle rapture of a postponed power, which the world knows not because it has no external trappings, but which to his prophetic vision is more real than that which commands an army. And if this joy should not be yours, still it is only thus that you can know that you have done what lay in you to do,—can say that you have lived and be ready for the end.'

Dr Indira Parthasarathy's *great books have added a new dimension to literature. In an era of lost security they represent a search for certainties. Technically he has explored the limbos of Tamil language which no prose writer before him had ever envisioned. Indeed this writer of creative genius has demonstrated through his creations the fundamental truth that in order to achieve a multi-dimensional effect, you have to use a multi-dimensional language.*

Before I conclude, I cannot help striking a personal note as one of his school students in the days of my youth. *When I was leaving the Madrasi High School in February 1958, he gave a testimonial to me in long hand, which is still in my treasured possession. My close personal association with him has been steady and continuous for 55 years from 1955 till today.*

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A SCHOOL TESTIMONIAL*

I know Shri V. Sundaram for the last three years when he studied under me in the Higher Secondary Classes.

The things that struck me most in him were his studious habits and sterling character. His uncanny sense of discretion is quite in evidence when he adapts suitably the things he assimilates, perhaps an assertion of his fundamental understanding of the values of life. His sincerity of purpose, devotion to work, and above all a thorough going single-mindedness in achieving things mark him out. I think he needs a little bit of self-confidence. If he were to put off his reservedness and 'ivory tower' attitude, and get into company with a bang, it will cure him of this defect.

His manners, perhaps a trifle blunt, reflect his high character. He is gifted with a temperament that will never make him go bad.

I wish him all success in life.

R. PARTHASARATHY
16-2-1958
Madarasi Higher Secondary School,
Lodi Estate, New Delhi.

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* This Testimonial was given to me in February 1958 by Shri R. Parthasarathy when I was studying in Madarasi Higher Secondary School in the 11th Std. Soon thereafter Sri Parathasarathy joined the Delhi University as a Lecturer in Tamil and later became well-known as an internationally famous Novelist in Tamil, writing under the pen name 'Indira Parthasarathy.' I cherish and treasure this Testimonial as an invaluable possession.

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Mr. V.Sundaram, I.A.S., (Retired), born at Tiruchirapalli in 1942, took his B.A. (Hons) and M.A. degrees in Economics from St. Stephen's College, New Delhi, worked as Lecturer in Delhi University before he entered the I.A.S. in 1965. Latter he underwent special training in University of Sussex, U.K.

Allotted to Tamilnadu Cadre, Mr. Sundaram worked with distinction in several capacities such as Sub-Collector, Deputy Secretary, Joint Commissioner, Director, Chairman of Industrial Departments, Collector of Tirunelveli. He was the first Chairman of Tuticorin Port trust. Before he took voluntary retirement in 1994, he adorned the post of Secretary to Government, Institutional Finance, Rural Development, Food and Consumer Protection, PWD, Personnel & Administrative Reforms.

He is a Rotarian, connoisseur of art objects. a numismatist, a mridangam player, a dancer of karagam - the list is long. And above all, he has a passion for writing and follows the tradition of those civil servants who were inclined towards literary pursuits despite pressure of work. A regular contributor to newspapers and periodicals, he has authored half-a-dozen books which are socially relevant. Dr.Indira Parthasarathy, the doyen of Modern Tamil literature, calls him a multi-dimensional scholar who brings to bear upon his writings his rare talents of encyclopaedic knowlwdge, imagination and a natural feel for words.